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# VUEWEEKLY

#640 / MARCH 20 - 26, 2008 | FREE  
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# WAR & OIL



HOW THE IRAQ  
WAR HAS  
AFFECTED  
EDMONTON  
[ DAVID BERRY / 71 ]

ARTS: THE EXPERIMENT / 22  
FILM: UP THE YANGTZE / 29  
MUSIC: HAWKSLEY WORKMAN / 42

*Smiley*



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JUST ANNOUNCED - ON SALE FRIDAY

# THE SAINT ALVIA

MAY 22 - VELVET UNDERGROUND



DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQUIRED  
TICKETS ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & FS (WEM)

JUST ANNOUNCED - ON SALE FRIDAY

# LOCAL H



DOORS 8 PM  
18+ ID REQ.

JUNE 14 - STARLITE ROOM

TIX ALSO AT  
MEGATUNES,  
BLACKBYRD  
& LISTEN

# DRAGONETTE

WITH SWEET THINGS & TIM GIBERTSON

MARCH 26 - STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ. - TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD



# MINUS THE BEAR

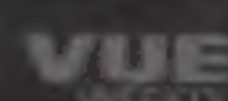
WITH SYLVIE

MAR 27 - STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID - TIX: MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD, LISTEN



# born ruffians



MARCH 28

VELVET UNDERGROUND

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MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD, LISTEN

# THE MOST SERENE REPUBLIC

FRIDAY APRIL 4  
STARLITE ROOM

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# DIMMU BORGIR

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# 3 Inches of Blood

TOUR of CHAMPIONS I

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APRIL 15  
STARLITE ROOM

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# CHIODOS AND PROTEST THE HERO

APRIL 14  
EDMONTON  
EVENT CENTRE

DOORS 7 PM - ALL AGES  
TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD  
AND FS (WEM)



# AS I LAY DYING

MAY 3  
STARLITE ROOM

7 PM - ALL AGES - TICKETS ALSO  
AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD, FS (WEM))



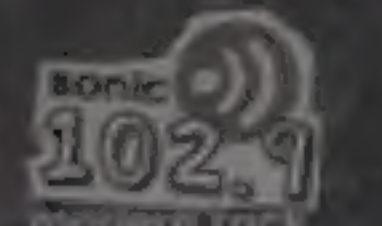
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## VUE CONTENTS

### FRONT 6

ISSUES - 10  
DERRICK JENSEN - 11

### SNOW ZONE 15

KICKING HORSE - 15  
LYNXES - 16

### DISH 18

CHILL-HEADS - 18  
GREAT HEAD - 19

### ARTS 22

THE LONESOME WEST - 22  
KAREN TRASK - 25

### FILM 29

THE TRACEY FRAGMENTS - 31  
CAPSULE REVIEWS - 32

### MUSIC 34

DANIEL BUXTON - 41  
JESSE DEE - 43

### BACK 48

FREEWILL - 48  
QUEERMONTON - 49

## ON THE COVER



### THE IMPACT OF IRAQ / 7

"When you lose a good friend—and I've had that happen—it still doesn't hit you, and you just soldier on. That's part of the credo: you press on. That's not necessarily a bad thing, because the mission is still ongoing, and you can't fall to pieces. Once they come home, that's when things start to happen." —Scott Taylor, editor of *Esprit de Corps*, on the impact of casualties.

## ARTS



### THE EXPERIMENT / 22

"I think of these all as landscapes. It's about 3D journalism—it doesn't exist, hasn't taken off yet, but it's coming. I'm getting in while I can." —Fish Griwkowsky, photographer, on his 3D photos.

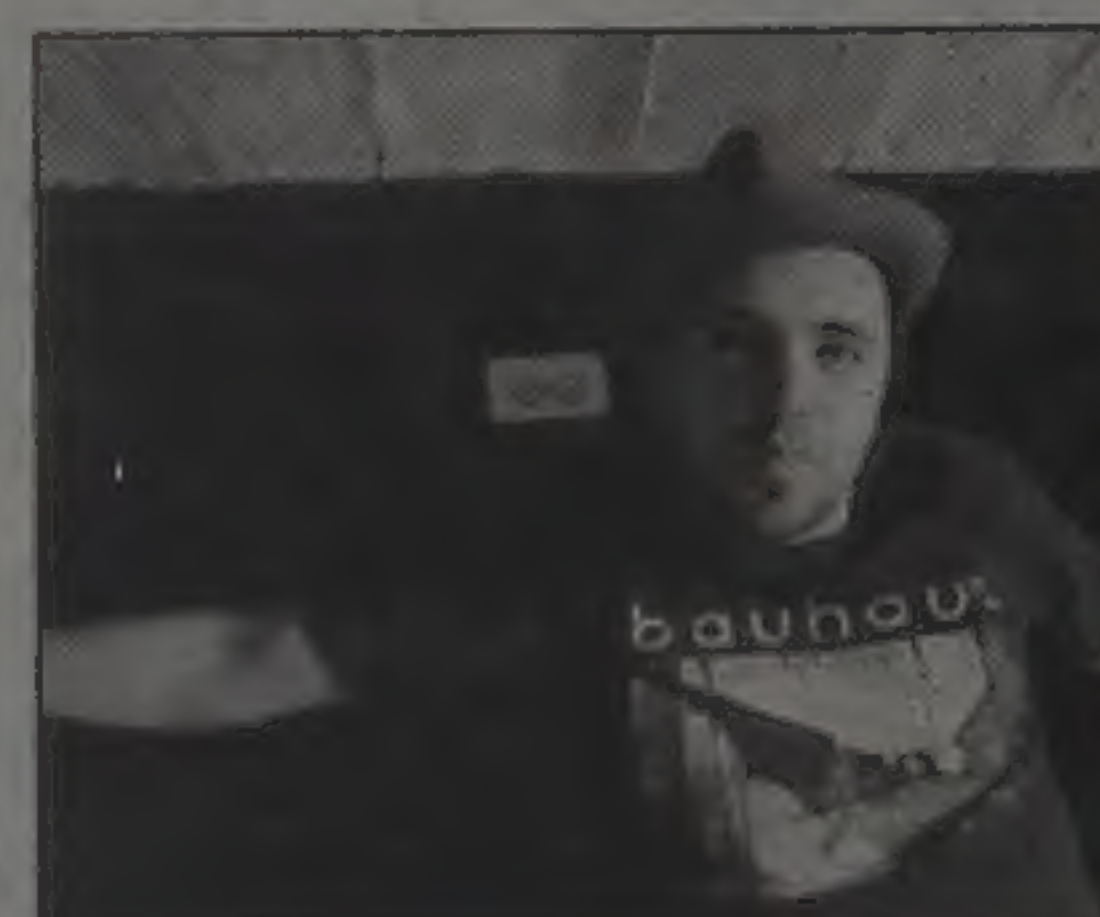
## FILM



### FUNNY GAMES / 29

"The film succeeds where it is the most staggeringly simple, from Cindy's departure from her family to a fascinating turn of events that upsets Jerry's confidence as a young person in China. They are told with a great deal of sincerity, and framed by a passionate view of the Yangtze that suggests the integrity of Chang's vision." —Jonathan Busch, critic, on Yung Chang's China-spanning documentary

## MUSIC



### HAWKSLEY WORKMAN / 42

"I was at a meeting at lunch today and saw somebody drinking a green beer. I just think, 'Oh, man.' I don't need any reason to drink food colouring just for a laugh." —Hawksley Workman, musician, on St Patrick's Day.

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PARK PLACE COMMUNITIES sets itself apart from the competition by meeting the demand for new homes in a unique, responsible way; by creating attractive, well-built, affordable condo buildings in popular neighbourhoods throughout the city with a major focus on customer service. What's more, they're using customer feedback in order to offer the most sought-after upgrades... and to make sure that each development is an improvement on the last.

It's easy for a builder to forget that each customer needs individual care. Why special care? Because these people are about to make what could be the largest purchase of their lives. That's why, from the very beginning, Park Place was determined to have the friendliest, most well informed staff in the business. You sense the difference the moment you walk into one of the show suites or sales centres: "Hey, these people are sincerely excited about putting me into a home that's perfect for me". They greet you warmly, remember your name and, best of all, they listen carefully when you explain your requirements and your dreams.

Anyone who's been through an unsatisfactory 'first time buyer' experience ... being pressured to sign contracts, fighting for repairs or changes, waiting for weeks to have phone calls returned... knows just how important pre and post purchase service can be. Word is getting around fast that not only is Park Place straightforward and supportive up front, they're just as helpful in every phase of the relationship. They realize that becoming a homeowner is a big step and they work hard to make sure it's a happy, positive one. Existing Park Place homeowners often pop in to see what's new with the current projects. Referrals are probably the company's biggest source of new buyers.

A big part of the excitement for potential homeowners is keeping up-to-date with Park Place developments in order to pick the location they want and reserve their first choice so that they don't miss out. Perhaps it's no surprise that Park Place can't seem to build fast enough to accommodate all their requests. And it's quickly becoming clear why Park Place is among the top developers of new homes in Edmonton... and why they'll be around for a long, long time.

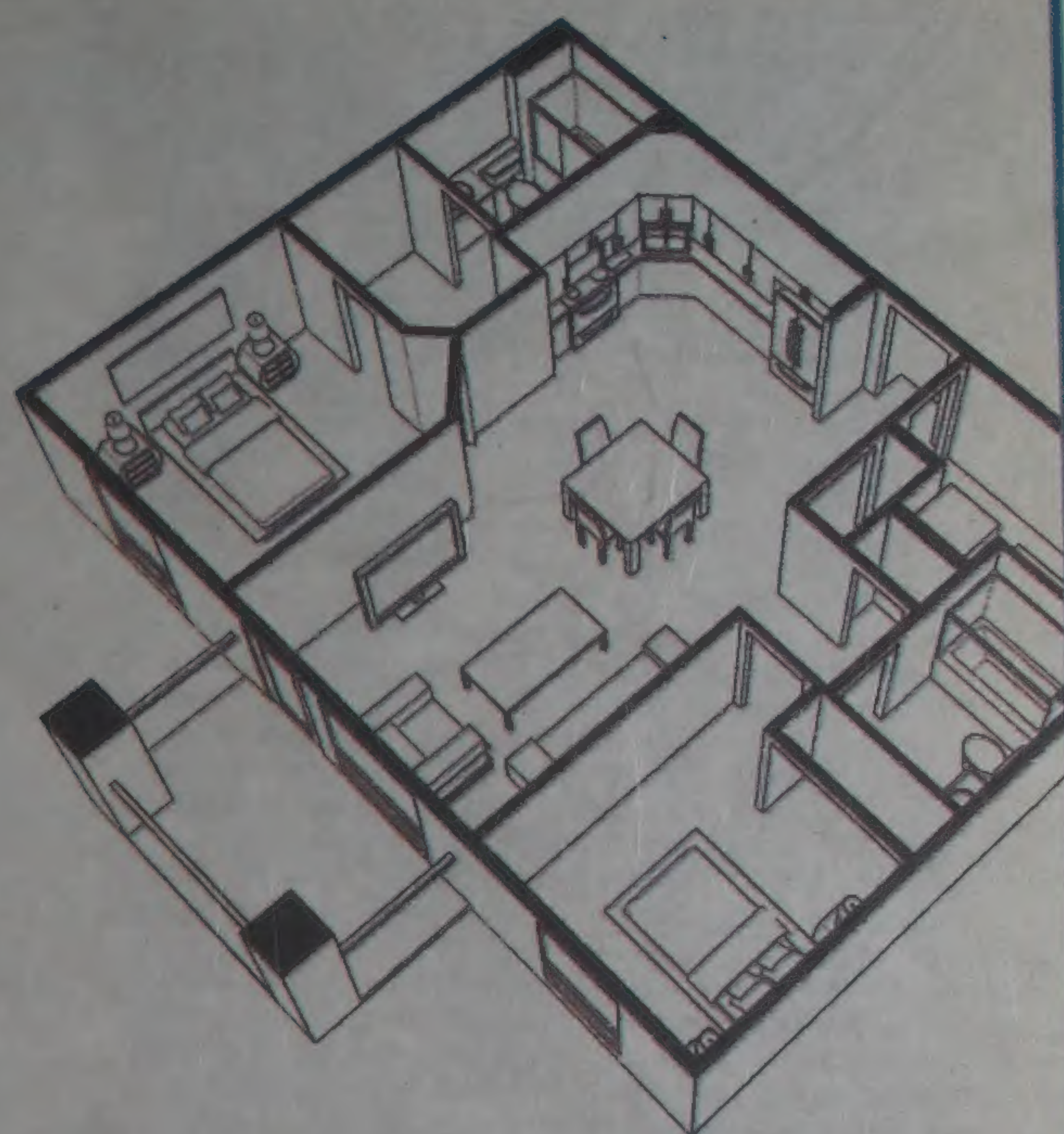
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## What an utterly idiotic idea

SCOTT HARRIS / [scott@vueweekly.com](mailto:scott@vueweekly.com)

As scant two weeks after the provincial election the shock at the scale of the Tory landslide has given way to earnest discussion about what to do about the fact that at least 59 per cent of eligible voters didn't bother to do anything with their franchise, the worst turnout in Canadian history.

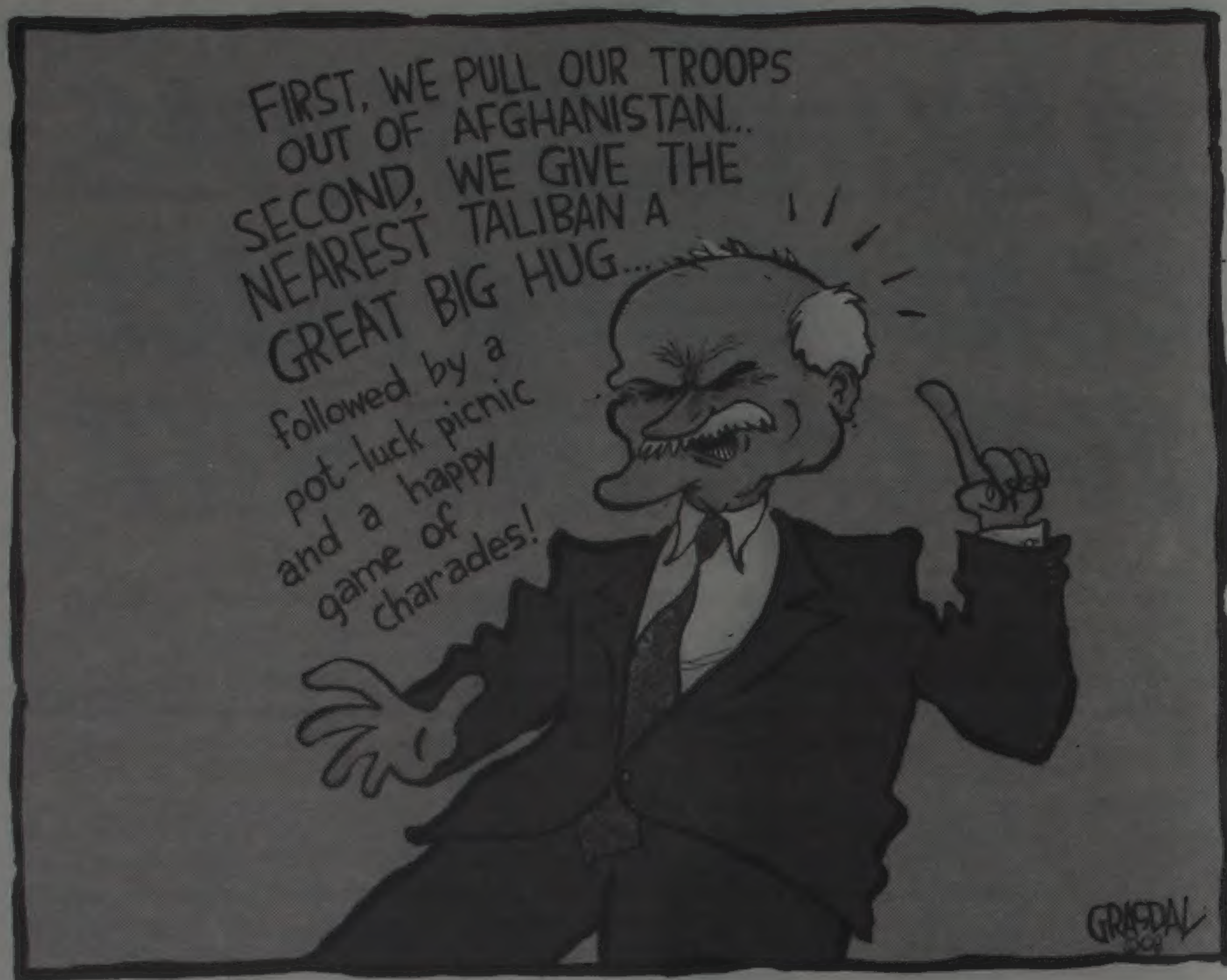
A range of quick fixes to the malady have been floated, including very intelligent ideas like taking a good look at much-needed electoral reforms that would make the seat distribution in the Legislature more proportionate to the percentage of the popular vote each party received, re-working riding boundaries to move slightly closer to the professed goal of each vote carrying roughly equal weight and instituting rules around spending limits for election campaigns.

Another idea being bandied about is most certainly not one that would make it into the "good ideas" folder: making voting mandatory and instituting some kind of penalty to compel voters to drag themselves to the polls.

It's hard to fathom how otherwise intelligent people could possibly consider mandatory voting as anything other than compounding a problem by adding insult to injury. Forcing people to vote won't magically create a citizenry that is engaged and informed about politics any more than not giving a kid their allowance unless they take out the garbage makes them interested in a career in waste management. It would create elections in which alienated voters make largely uninformed decisions about a process in which they perceive little or no value to avoid negative consequences in order to create the comforting façade that there are no serious problems with our democratic system and institutions.

It also once again elevates the most marginal of active democratic participation to the pinnacle of civic engagement. If participation is so important that we have to make it compulsory, why not make volunteering with a political party mandatory, or punish people who skip out on all-candidate forums or fine individuals who don't belong to their community leagues? Oh, right, because those are all stupid ideas.

People chose to participate in the political process not because the vote is somehow sacred, but because it is a strategic way to influence the decisions that impact their lives. For a host of reasons which should be self-evident, people in Alberta don't perceive our electoral system that way. Perhaps an honest investigation as to why this is the case is a more appropriate—and sensible—place to start. ▽



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## MAIL LETTERS

### LACY, RURAL ROOTS BOTH AMAZING

I just read the article with Lacy Senio ("Edmonton organization lays down deep global roots in rural Alberta," Mar 6 - Mar 12, 2008). I have had several opportunities to get to know this brilliant young lady, who is so full of life and compassion. I myself have attended a few of the Rural Roots conferences, and will be volunteering at this year's conference as well. I also went on the Rural Roots tour with Lacy and a few other youth.

The Rural Roots project offers many amazing experiences and has really inspired me to make changes and stand up for the rights to which we are all entitled. Lacy is such an incredible girl and reading this article made my day. We all have a voice, and although it may seem tiny in a big world, if we all raise our voices together we can play a part in improving life for every individual. I'm very glad that Rural Roots and Change for Children are getting the spotlight they very much deserve. They have taught me a lot about social injustice and how I can make a difference. Thank you for doing this article.

CHEYENNE WORKMAN

### BARLOW NEEDS TO CHECK HER FACTS

Never let the facts get in the way of an apparently well-constructed but false argument. In criticizing NAFTA as it currently stands ("Renegotiate NAFTA? That sounds like a good idea," Mar 6 - Mar 12, 2008), Maude Barlow makes reference to all the usual "facts" that the left draws upon to make their arguments. While I could fill several pages addressing the multitude of false statements, I will point to the two that populists seem to like pulling out of a hat most often.

Barlow tells us that official government statistics point to real wages that "have been stagnant for 30 years." Trained labour economists like myself always chuckle when we see this one. Nothing could be further from the truth. Between 1975 and 2005, real wages rose by over 20 per cent. This information is available from Statistics Canada on their CANSIM data tapes, if Barlow cares to check her facts. For the last two years that trend would have continued, albeit at a quicker pace. It is true that real wages in Canada have not kept up with those with more flexible labour markets, such as in the US and UK, but they have risen nonetheless.

The second point she makes in the same sentence is that this supposed stagnation in real wages has occurred while "profits are at an all-time high." I find it interesting that the left perpetually argues that profits are at an all time high. Of course, in nominal terms one would

certainly expect that aggregate profits would typically grow each year, except in recession years. If Barlow wants to make false arguments about real wages she should at least be consistent enough to make the same arguments about real, not nominal profits. The reality is that wage and profit shares are relatively constant over time. The reality is also that Canada continues to be one of the more egalitarian countries in terms of income distribution, and this has changed little over the past 30 years.

DICK BEASON, PhD  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, U OF A

### THE DOC-MAKING BASTARDS WOULD, PRESUMABLY, FREEZE IN THE DARK

If the tar sands were in Ontario or Québec this documentary ("Locally produced doc aims to add to discourse on tar sands," Mar 13 - Mar 19, 2008) would never have been made and it would be a non-issue. You will never convince me otherwise.

RHODA METELLAN

*Vue Weekly* welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (*Vue Weekly*, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email ([letters@vueweekly.com](mailto:letters@vueweekly.com)). Preference is given to feedback about articles in *Vue Weekly*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.



# Five years of war in Iraq have hit home in Edmonton

DAVID BERRY / david@vancouverweekly.com

The further we get away from the actual date, the better Canada's decision to not get involved with the US invasion of Iraq looks. Five years after the US launched its ill-conceived assault on the Middle Eastern nation, there aren't many—except perhaps those in the highest offices of the American government—who consider the situation anything but a quagmire.

The pretext for the war was quickly revealed to be specious, smoke and mirrors designed to hide what would appear to be a more imperial motive; talk of being greeted as liberators, of spreading democracy throughout the region, was revealed to be starry-eyed optimism at best, as fervently anti-American factions sprung up both in Iraq and the region as a whole. To date, conservative estimates put the cost of the war at more than \$500 billion, with a human toll of almost 4000 American soldiers killed, nearly 30 000 wounded, to say nothing (as is frequently the case) of the almost 90 000 confirmed Iraqi civilians killed.

And yet, though Canada has managed to escape the most direct affects of the war, we don't remain untouched. The beast beside has been twitching awfully violently lately, and we can't help but feel its effects—and nowhere is that more true than in Edmonton. North of our city lie two areas profoundly affected by the war in Iraq: the Fort McMurray tar sands and CFB Edmonton.

ON

Critics and cynics will often point to oil as America's real justification for invading Iraq, so perhaps it's no surprise that one of the biggest effects the war has had on our province is in the tar sands.

We first have to realize why the Athabasca tar sands have sat relatively dormant for so long. The short answer is, of course, money: as any Albertan who works up north or pays attention is aware, pulling oil from the sand is an involved, lengthy process. First, the lot of it has to be strip-mined, then the raw bitumen must be separated; even with newer refining techniques, the whole process costs in the neighbourhood of \$24 - \$28 (all figures Canadian) per barrel. It simply isn't economically feasible to pull it out of the ground if oil prices are lower than that, which—with a brief exception in the late 1970s and early 1980s—they routinely were. Until recently, that is.

Since 2003, world oil prices have increased more or less steadily. There are multiple reasons for that but, as Joseph Doucette, a professor of energy policy and director of the School of Energy and the Environment at the University of Alberta explains, it's mostly an issue of supply and demand.

"If you look at what's happening at the supply side and on the demand side, you'll get a big piece of the answer (to why oil prices have risen)," Doucette explains. "If you think of the

text-book supply and demand curves ... the supply side a bit steeper because the cost of producing it is going up, and the demand curve is steeper, too, because we don't have many good substitutes for most of our uses of oil."

Of course, it's not just a matter of supply and demand, but who's supplying and who's demanding. Though the energy demands of Asia—particularly China and India—are steadily rising, the United States is still far and away the world's number one energy consumer, using 24 per cent of the world's oil supply, just under the total consumption of Europe and almost triple its nearest competitor (China, which uses nine per cent).

Energy Bulletin recently reported that wartime has increased oil usage by almost 40 million barrels a year, or more than 100 000 barrels per day. Combined with regular growth, that pushed total US consumption to over 20 589 000 barrels a day in 2006, the most recent year for which full data was available, an increase of more than 828 000 barrels from 2002 levels, the last full year before the war.

At the same time, oil is becoming increasingly hard to find. Stocks of sweet, light crude are slowly dwindling, and the majority of oil of any kind tends to be located in areas that are politically unstable or hostile towards the US. And, if America did go into Iraq for the oil, it hasn't worked out for them: frequent sabotage and the unwillingness of US companies to invest in the oil fields has left them producing under 2 million barrels a day, according to 2006 statistics, well below both their 2000 peak (2.6 million barrels) and pre-war estimates of potential (3 million barrels or so).

Enter Canada, and specifically Alberta. The tar sands represent perhaps the largest single reserve of oil in the world: estimates say there is likely more than 174 billion barrels of recoverable oil trapped in the ground. (The US, coincidentally, did not officially recognize these reserves until 2003.) It may be hard to get out of the ground, but it is close and, most importantly, it is safe.

"People look at prices and costs, but they adjust those based on local conditions, things like political risk, risk to workers, disruptions of productions and things like that," explains Doucette. "Even if it had the same rate of return as a place like Nigeria, for instance, Alberta is going to be, hands down, the preferred place to invest."

That's a sentiment that's echoed by Paul Hagel, the senior communications rep for Shell Canada's oil sands growth team. Shell is a relatively recent comer to the tar sands, having officially

## COVER IRAQ WAR

opened the Albian Sands in 2003, but the company is making up for lost time: last year, it announced plans for a \$27 billion expansion that, pending government approval, would eventually increase the company's production capacity to more than 250 000 barrels a day. According to Hagel, Shell's reasons for putting that kind of money into the Alberta ground are simple.

"Politically stable, secure, with an abundance of natural resources: that's Canada," he says. "It makes us a secure place to invest, and we're here for the very long haul."

And though the sheer amount of oil will eventually draw other suitors, for now, what doesn't stay between our borders—and it's worth pointing out that Canada doesn't currently have a pipeline from the tar sands to Eastern Canada—goes to the US. According to the US Energy Information Administration, in 2006, 99 per cent of Canada's oil exports went to America, for a total of almost 2.4 million barrels a day, more than the entirety of the Persian gulf.

What's more, those 2.4 million barrels represent a 20 per cent increase over 2002 levels, while more traditional suppliers like the Saudis and Venezuela have seen their export numbers dip. The implication is clear: ever since invading Iraq, the US has turned increasingly to Canada. And, considering almost two-thirds of Canada's oil comes from the tar sands, to Alberta in particular.

And that's not about to change any time soon. Though the US government recently announced it was going to look for less carbon-intensive oils for its own purchasing needs—that would be the military and the post office—few believe such pronouncements will have any real effect.

"If you go back to the 1970s and the two OPEC crises and the price increases that were seen then, the US said they wanted to become less dependant on imported oil: their percentage is more or less the same now as it was back then," Doucette explains caustically.

"From here ... it will be local and domestic issues that decide how the oil sands move forward," he adds. "At some point, I think Albertans will demand our government be more proactive on managing the issues surrounding our oil sands."

## WAR

It is one of the more unfortunate ironies of the Iraq War that, even though Canada isn't involved, our soldiers have still been touched by it.

Canada was among the first nations to go into Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, the stated goals of our government at the time being to defend our national interests, ensure leadership in world affairs and to help Afghanistan rebuild. Though elite, for

the first part of the war our role was limited: the majority of the mission was centered around Kabul, which had been secured since the first months of the invasion.

That was to change in Jan 2006. As part of the International Security Assistance Force, Canada took a more prominent role in the southern provinces, stationed out of the southern city of Kandahar. That increase in responsibility was linked directly to decreased US troop presence in the county, which in itself was linked directly to increased US troop presence in Iraq.

The mission in Kandahar coincides with a massive upsurge in Canadian troop fatalities. Of the 79 Canadian soldiers killed, just eight happened pre-2006; of the 21 Edmonton casualties, 17 have perished since 2006. These are lives that have been lost, at least in part, because of reduced American activity, and the attendant upswing in Canadian action.

The effect this more prominent role—and the attendant increased danger—has had on the soldiers, though, is surprisingly mixed. According to Scott Taylor, a former professional soldier who founded and has spent the last 20 years editing *Esprit de Corps*, a magazine devoted to the Canadian Armed Forces, the chance to get into a combat mission is almost an affirming one for a soldier.

"As some commanders have said, it's what they've always been waiting for," he explains. "That sounds crazy: people are being killed. But, finding a purpose and having a clear-cut mission—that's what a soldier wants."

"There was a lot of confusion in the peacekeeping generation, in the early '90s, because nobody was clear on the mission—it changed almost daily," he continues. "Now, it's, 'We're there; we're in Afghanistan; we're conducting counter-insurgency operations.' These guys are soldiers."

That sentiment is echoed by Major Trevor Gosselin, a tank squadron commander who recently returned from a six-month tour of Afghanistan with Lord Strathcona's Horse. He spent the

'90s on various missions in Bosnia, Kosovo and the West Sahara, and to him, Afghanistan is preferable, even if that sense of mission comes at a cost.

"Soldiers join armies, unfortunately, for a purpose that we wish wasn't there, but we know in the world that there are things that armies need to do," he explains. "The threat is much more significant over there, but ... it's certainly much easier to look at the cause of Afghanistan and know what we have to do to help this failing state. In our situation in Bosnia and Kosovo, it was really hard to tell who were the real bad guys—here there's no question."

Though the sense of mission helps a soldier, there's no getting around the fact that many of them will have to experience the death of a comrade. That, and the other hazards of being in a war zone, have a well-documented, profound effect on young soldiers, something we're already beginning to see take its toll: a recent Veteran Affairs study revealed that incidents of post-traumatic stress have tripled among veterans since Canada first deployed troops to Afghanistan—and as Taylor expects, we've likely only seen the beginning.

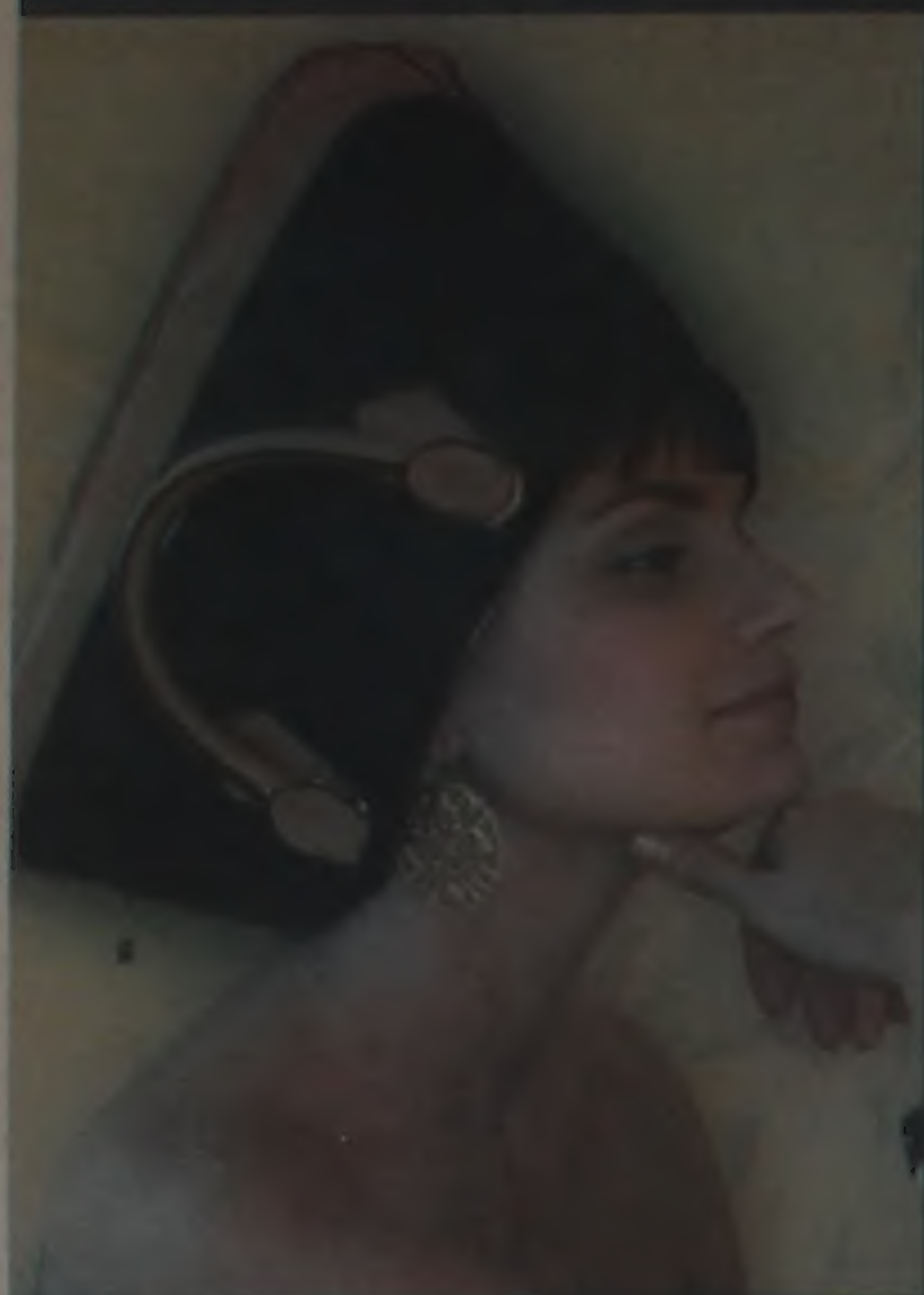
"When you lose a good friend—and I've had that happen—it still doesn't hit you, and you just soldier on. That's part of the credo: you press on," he explains. "That's not necessarily a bad thing, because the mission is still ongoing, and you can't fall to pieces. Once they come home, that's when things start to happen."

Sgt Major Jeff Bamford, who served on the same tour as Gosselin, eerily echoes that sentiment. When asked how they dealt with the recent death of Trooper Michael Yuki Hayakaze, who died on Mar 2, just before the squadron's return, Bamford responded stoically, though also revealingly.

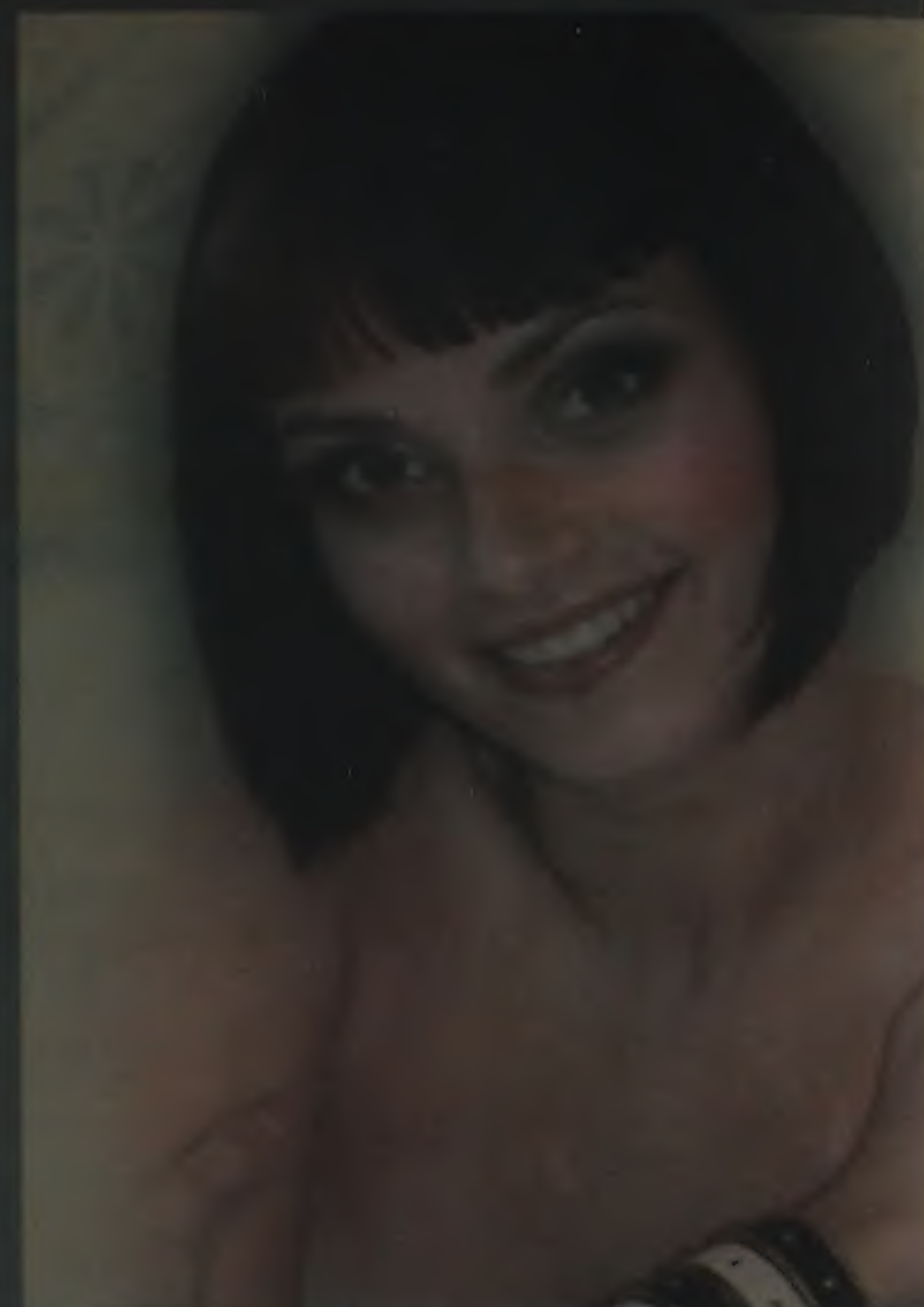
"You have to carry on with the mission, the mission doesn't just stop," he explained, sternly. "Everything carries on—everything. Once you get back out to a safer area, then you can calm down, relax, take a breath, be glad you made it, sort out your buddies, sort out your soldiers and shed a few tears. That's how we did it."

One can only imagine what will happen as more soldiers get a chance to take a breath and reflect on what has happened. Unlike the tar sands, the trickle-down effects of Iraq on our soldiers have yet to make themselves obvious: when they do finally rear their head, though, we're not going to like what we see. ♡





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## 'White pride' groups can march, but don't spell gud

LEAH ORR / leah@vuweekly.com

Mar 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, but "pro-white" activists, including those in Alberta, have given the date another name: White Pride World Wide Day.

According to a flyer distributed by Calgary's Aryan Guard, "We, a local White Civil rights [sic] activist group are hosting a march on March 21st as a declaration of our freedom and pride."

Cody, an anti-racist activist from Calgary, who asked that only his first name be used, says that the intent of such groups is more about intimidation than pride.

"Just a few months back, there was an incident [in Calgary] where two neo-Nazis stabbed someone in a Safeway parking lot," he says. "They went to court and got convicted on assault charges. They consider themselves 'pro-white activists' but from my experience, I would classify them as racist terrorists. They use fear tactics to spread their political beliefs."

"White Pride is clearly and solely a euphemism for hatred," agrees Jason Devine, a public spokesperson with the group Anti-Racist Action (ARA) Calgary. He points to the Aryan Guard's website as proof. "It's completely disingenuous. They say they're non-violent, but pose with weapons. These people have violent tendencies, at the very least."

Devine should know. The house he shares with his fiancée and four children was firebombed on Feb 12 in an attack he believes was orchestrated by Aryan Guard members. While no one was hurt, Devine says that the message behind the attack is clear: his activism has made his family a target.

Intimidation and violence by racists are nothing new to Alberta. In the early 1990s, a group calling itself "The Final Solution" (referring to the Nazi plan to exterminate the European Jewish population during the Second World War) moved into Edmonton and brought with it a culture of violence that culminated in the highly publicized 1990 attack on Keith Rutherford.

In the past year, Aryan Guard members have been putting up posters, handing out leaflets and responding to anti-racist rallies with their own protests. They hold regular meetings and are said to be actively recruiting, particularly among city youth.

## NEWS RACISM

"A year ago, it would be rare to see these neo-Nazis walking around. Now they're all over the place," Cody says. "You can find them on buses and trains, in parks and at bars. They're all over the place now and they're growing."

WHILE EDMONTON has faced similar problems in the past (local musician Pat Bourne's house was firebombed in the early hours of Feb 6, 2006 by skinheads who accused him of being a "Stalinist"), compared to Calgary things here have been quiet. Local activists say they aren't aware of more than a couple of neo-Nazis living in Edmonton and they haven't seen any signs of increased organizing by racist groups. That doesn't mean they aren't standing guard, though.

"They've been making trips to Lethbridge," says an Edmonton-based anti-racist activist, who asked to remain anonymous for safety reasons, "so Edmonton isn't too far of a jump. It's easier to fight it where it starts than to clean up a mess, so we need to stop it from happening here again."

According to Anti-Racist Canada, the Final Solution was driven out of Edmonton by an aggressive campaign by the Anti-Fascist League and Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice (S.H.A.R.P.s). These two groups identified neo-Nazis and created an environment so hostile that the racists could not recruit, spread information or even socialize without being met with fierce—and very public—opposition. Similar tactics are currently being used in Calgary.

"We can't just sit around and wait for the police," Devine argues. "Essentially, the police's hands are tied. Until they break the law, it's our job to alert the community. We show up to let them know that we're watching them and that the community doesn't have to be afraid."

The Aryan Guard refused to comment, responding via email, "We have made it our standard [sic] practice not to speak to any main stream [sic] media or people representing any such media! We will give our own report on it to our own sources of media, who we know will not try to pervert our words for the favour of there [sic] leftist papers or for the sales of there [sic] papers!"

## Don't hate the media, own the media

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuweekly.com

The issue of media concentration has long been a concern for Canadians, made more acute when the ever-lovable Conrad Black swept through the Canadian print media world in the mid-'90s, gobbling up papers from coast to coast.

Like Black's luck, media concentration has gone from bad to worse over the years. According to the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union's media monitor, in Alberta just two companies (CanWest Global and Quebecor) own 90 per cent of provincial daily newspaper circulation and just two conglomerates (Bowes/Quebecor and Great West/Glacier—owners of *Vue's* competitor *See Magazine*) own 70 per cent of Alberta's weekly newspaper circulation. Nationally, a handful of chains control almost the entire media diet of Canadians.

## MEDIA

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It was in response to this concentration—and the problems of diversity and accountability that emerge from it—that motivated the creation in 2003 of *The Dominion*, a national grassroots monthly that its founders hope in time will grow to offer an alternative news voice in Canada.

"We got tired of hearing talk that it would be nice if there was a progressive national newspaper in Canada and decided to start one—with no resources whatsoever," explains Dru Oja Jay, the editor and one of the founders of *The Dominion*. "It's expanded from there to be a fairly substantial network of a few hundred writers and editors across Canada and around the world."

While the *Globe and Mail* likely isn't checking over their shoulder too often just yet, Jay says that the growth of *The Dominion*, which has some 4500 email subscribers and between 30 000 and 60 000 unique visitors to its website depending on the month in addition to a few hundred print subscribers, has shown there is room for alternative voices in the media landscape.

Moving the project to the next level is the motivation behind *The Dominion's* current month-long cross-Canada "Own Your Media" tour, which hits Edmonton on Mar 22.

"What we want to do is continue the expansion towards a grassroots Canada-wide newspaper, something that can challenge the corporate media on its coverage and provide serious alternative coverage,"

CONTINUES ON PAGE 13

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# ISSUES



## Water policy must ensure people come before profits

SHEILA MUXLOW / [canadians.org](http://canadians.org)

Clean water is a basic necessity of life. Without access to clean water, a person will die. Without access to clean water, future generations will die.

This seems like common sense, no? So actions that pollute and destroy water would seem to be counter intuitive, right? Unfortunately, this relatively straight-forward common sense has eluded many individuals in political leadership and has brought our planet into a global water crisis.

It's a crisis of staggering proportions, in which 1.2 billion people don't have access to clean drinking water and four billion people lack adequate sanitation services. In the Global South, a child dies every 15 seconds because of preventable, water-related diseases.

A local manifestation of this crisis can be seen 700 kilometres north of Edmonton in the small community of Fort Chipewyan. Community members there have been dying of rare cancers which many suspect are caused by leakages of toxic substances into the Athabasca River, which in turn make their way into the community's water supply. Provincial watersheds and ecosystems are also destroyed by water diversion projects that transfer water from one basin to another.

So what's going on?

Unbelievably this water crisis is not an ecological phenomenon but a political one, emerging from an ideology that privileges water for profit over water for people.

Despite growing evidence that water privatization has harmed people and the planet—just google "water meters South Africa" or "water privatization Moncton"—the Canadian government continues to be an avid promoter of water privatization at home and abroad.

What's worse, as politicians have eroded the public systems and infrastructure which can protect water resources and address issues of pollution, private corporations have been able to move in to take advantage of the situation. At home we see increased pressure on our municipalities to privatize infrastructure through public-private partnerships (P3s). Ongoing federal and provincial underfunding of infrastructure, including water infrastructure, has created the ideal conditions for privatization. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) calculates that the municipal water infrastructure deficit across Canada is \$31 billion, a 47 per cent increase since 1996. This estimate only covers the maintenance of existing infrastructure, not the cost for new projects, yet both the 2007 and 2008 federal budgets contain little money for new infrastructure.

Instead of investing in public water systems, the Harper Conservative government is pushing to privatize drinking water and sewage treatment systems through the "Building Canada" infrastructure fund. The fund imposes a mandatory P3 review, which increases pressure on municipalities to privatize

larger water and wastewater projects.

Before you go falling for the argument that those private companies provide more efficient services than traditional public projects, check out the report released last year by the FCM debunking the myth that P3s consistently cost less or provide better services. The report notes that municipalities relying on P3s can lose the ability to ever go back to public systems, and that P3s can make projects less flexible, less transparent and less accountable.

**ON AN INTERNATIONAL SCALE**, Canada has played a key role in blocking a meaningful international solution to the global water crisis at the United Nations. In 2002 Canada stood alone among 53 countries by voting against the appointment of a UN special rapporteur on water, who would have been able to provide real insight into the global water crisis with focussed research. More recently, Canada reacted negatively to a 2006 resolution of the UN Human Rights Council to conduct a study on the right to water.

The fact that water is not recognized as a human right has allowed decision making over water policy to slip away from the public arenas of the UN and governments and towards institutions that promote water privatization. Present Canadian leadership even financially supports the controversial Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility, which promotes water privatization in the Global South.

But as Plato once opined, "to prefer evil to good is not in human nature," and it is unquestionably evil to deny people access to a basic need because of a desire for profit and power. If Plato was correct then human nature is built to resist this ideology.

So whether it is breaking pre-paid water meters in the townships of South Africa or shutting down Coca-Cola's operation in the Indian state of Kerala, communities around the world are rejecting water privatization, and it is essential that the awareness and resistance grows stronger still.

With World Water Day coming up on Mar 22, the Council of Canadians, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Oxfam and the Polaris Institute are working together to make a splash on the issue (pun intended). We are joining labour unions, civil society groups and community activists around the world to demand that water be kept in public hands by exerting pressure at local, national and international levels. To join in our efforts please visit [canadians.org](http://canadians.org).

With a strong voice we can demand that Canada implements a national water policy to ensure that water is recognized as a human right and protected as a common good for future generations. Until then, Canada will remain a rogue state that promotes privatization and profit over people and nature. ▀

Sheila Muxlow is the Prairies regional organizer for the Council of Canadians.



# Environmental philosopher poet challenges 'death-camp' culture

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuwweekly.com

Reading a book by Derrick Jensen is not an easy thing to do. His works, which include the highly acclaimed *The Culture of Make Believe*, *A Language Older than Words* and *Endgame*, are intensely personal, urgent and uncompromising in their critique of the violence and increasingly unsustainable practices that pervade and define modern society.

His work has earned him the honorific of the "philosopher poet" of the environmental movement by his admirers, while the solutions he offers as potential remedies for the cataclysmic challenges we face—which include the dismantling of industrial society and a rejection of the absolute commitment to non-violence in social movements—have drawn sharp criticism from activists and corporate leaders.

But Jensen argues he is simply looking at the monumental scale of the ecological and social problems we face and applying critical thought and ruthless honesty in discussing solutions of the magnitude required.

"I don't see anybody else who is writing the stuff that I am. I don't see anybody else calling for the dismantling of this culture that's killing this planet," says Jensen over the phone from his home in northern California. "What I see for the most part is a bunch of utterly insufficient responses—in terms of writing—to what we face."

## LECTURE

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A central problem, he argues, is a fundamental disconnect from the natural world which limits our ability to recognize the scale of the problem.

"For example, all the so-called solutions that we see to global warming, they're all fundamentally, literally insane in that they take industrial capitalism as a given and the real, physical world as secondary, which means they're out of touch with physical reality," he contends. "I was doing this terrible, terrible radio interview down in Santa Barbara, California and I kept talking about how 90 per cent the large fish in the oceans are gone, there's 10 times as much plastic as phytoplankton in the ocean. And [the host] kept saying the same thing, 'All nice, Derrick, but let's get back in the real world.' And it's so many people. They forget what the real world is, and we see that on every level. Everywhere there's this inversion of reality; salmon populations collapse and all the newspapers talk about how this will harm commercial fisheries."

Jensen argues that the problems we face require solutions more radical than simply driving hybrid cars or



buying organic, arguing that the crisis we face is inherent in the industrial society that emerged from Europe and spread around the globe, displacing cultures and ecosystems as it went.

"The Tolowa Indians, on whose land I now live on, they lived here for 12 500 years—if you believe the myths of science, if you believe the myths of the Tolowa they've lived here since the beginning of time—and they didn't trash the place. This culture has been here 180 years and it's trashed the place. This culture has been destroying landbases ever since it started. One of the first written myths of this culture is Gilgamesh deforesting the plains and hillsides of Iraq, which prior to this culture was cedar forest so thick the sunlight never touched the ground."

In other words, the problem is with civilization itself. "I define civilization as any culture that is based on the growth of cities or based on the existence of cities ... [which] I've defined as people living in numbers large

enough to require the importation of resources," he explains.

"If you require the importation of resources then that means that your way of living can never be sustainable because you've denuded the landscape of that particular resource and as your city grows you're denuding an ever-larger area," he continues. "And that means that your way of life must be based on violence because if you require the importation of resources and the people in the next watershed over aren't going to trade you for it, you're going to take it because you need it."

While Jensen agrees that everyone in society has a responsibility to confront what is occurring, he rejects as "absurd" the notion that each of us is just as culpable as, say, the CEO of Weyerhaeuser is in deforestation because we use toilet paper.

"It's like an American Indian friend said to me—this is 15 or 20 years ago—I was bemoaning the fact that I'm driving and I'm causing global

warming because I drive. And he was like, 'Look, take responsibility for what you do. You didn't make car culture. The big thing is to bring down car culture.' There's this big problem amongst many in the so-called resistance that we think that the purpose is to live a life of purity, but the purpose of an activist is not to manifest any sort of moral purity, the purpose of activists is to confront and take down systems of oppressive power."

**LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM** through a systemic lens should also influence how people who are concerned about the environment and social justice choose to push for change.

"Another thing that I think would be very helpful is for people to recognize that there will not be a voluntary transformation to a sane and sustainable way of living," Jensen says. "And if you don't believe that the culture is going to undergo a voluntary transformation, don't you think that would change your strategies and your tactics? I would think it would."

One element of such a strategy, argues Jensen, is the tactical use of force (or "scare-quotes violence") when applicable, something Jensen says is accepted as a given amongst groups of oppressed people he has raised the issue with, but is more controversial with mainstream audiences.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

## Tibetan independence and power in Beijing

COMMENT

**DYER STRAIGHT**

GWYNNE DYER  
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The monks who marched through Lhasa on Mar 10 to mark the anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in 1959 did not want to wreck China's Olympic year, but they knew that Chinese troops would be less likely to shoot them this year than most. And so it proved: the monks were arrested, but the crowds of Tibetans who gathered on the following days to demand their release were not harmed.

The dilemma facing the Chinese troops was that if they didn't shoot, the crowds would inevitably grow bigger, for most Tibetans dream of independence and fear the mass immigration of Han Chinese. Tibet is a form of cultural genocide, for Mar 14 the crowds had gathered and it was they who were to be shot, attacking Chinese troops in Lhasa and looting and burning Chinese shops, banks and hotels.

A Chinese news agency Xinhua says that 10 people were killed in Lhasa on Mar 14. The Tibetan government-in-exile says 100 were killed, and accounts by foreign tourists in Lhasa support the higher figure. But so far, by most accounts, the victims have mostly been Han Chinese settlers killed by angry Tibetans.

This doesn't fit the simple foreign narrative of peaceful protesters and wicked Chinese, but nationalism, whether Tibetan or Fijian, is not an inherently tol-

erant and peaceful phenomenon. Foreign troops who hold their fire are still foreign occupiers, and innocent Chinese civilians who were encouraged by their own government to come and set up businesses in Lhasa are still unwelcome foreign agents of cultural genocide.

Foreign governments urge China to "exercise restraint," but they carefully avoid questioning Beijing's right to rule Tibet. And with the unrest spreading to ethnically Tibetan regions of neighbouring Chinese provinces—hundreds of monks from Labrang monastery marched through the town of Xiahe in Gansu province on Mar 14—the time may soon come when Beijing decides it has to crush all dissent by force regardless of the impact on the Olympics.

**FORCE WILL SUCCEED**, as it has before. The 1959 uprising was crushed, the 1989 demonstrations in Tibet were crushed, and the current unrest there will be crushed as well. Tibet's only chance to recover its independence will come if and when there is a change of regime in China.

China did not traditionally seek to expand beyond the boundaries of the Middle Kingdom, an agrarian society that lived in the north Chinese plain and the river valleys of southern China. The non-Chinese territories that now make up the western third of the country—the deserts and oases of Muslim Xinjiang and the high plateau of Tibet—were not conquered by Chinese, but rather swept into the same Mongol empire that conquered China itself in the 13th century.

Since the Mongol (Yuan) dynasty ruled

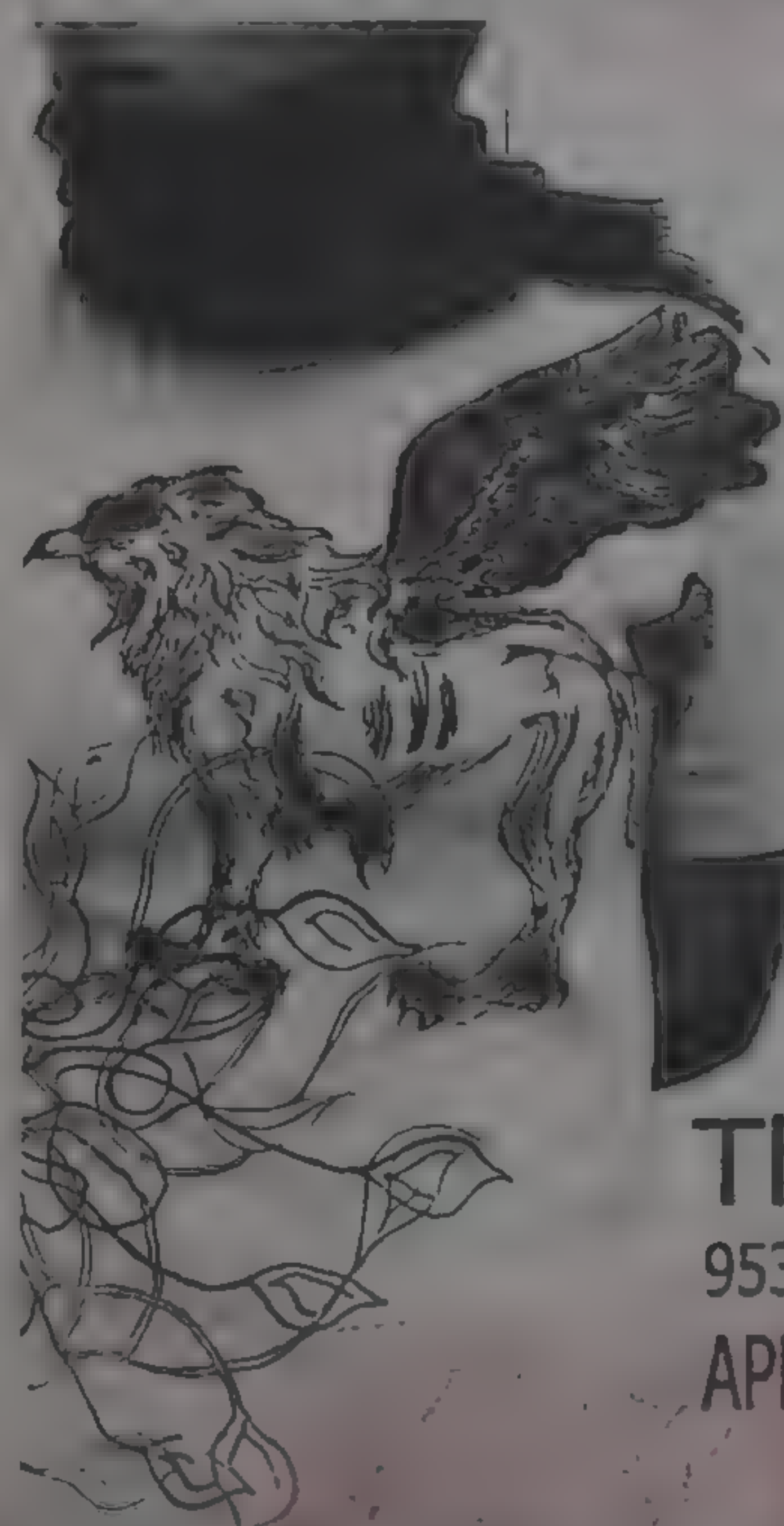
from Beijing, Tibet came to be seen as a Chinese possession, but the subsequent (ethnically Chinese) Ming dynasty took little interest in it. When another foreign nation of mounted nomads, the Manchus, conquered China in 1644, they too brought Tibet under Beijing's rule—and when the Manchu dynasty was finally overthrown in 1911, Tibet again slipped from China's control. For the next 40 years, Tibet was effectively independent.

The Chinese Communists seized power in 1949, and invaded Tibet the following year on the argument that "what was once ours is ours forever." So long as they hold power in Beijing, they will also hold Tibet—but an interesting analogy comes to mind, for the history of the Baltic states—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—is not very different.

They fell under the rule of the expanding Russian empire in the 18th century, but regained their independence after revolution overthrew the Tsarist regime in 1917. They lost it again when the Soviet Union invaded them in 1940—but got it back when the Communist regime in Moscow collapsed in 1991. And the main motive for their drive for independence was fear that their languages and cultures were being submerged by a wave of Russian immigrants.

As with the Baltic states, so too with Tibet. If there is ever a change of regime in Beijing, then a window of opportunity will open—and Tibet will have a couple of years to establish its independence before a new government emerges in Beijing that feels compelled to hold onto it in deference to Chinese nationalist sentiment. But that window is not open now. ▽

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"I get this a lot from pacifists, for example: we can't fight back. But the people who come after, including non-humans, aren't going to care whether we were pacifists or not pacifists, they're not going to care whether we voted Democratic, Republican, Green or whatever they are in Canada, they're not going to care about whether we wrote really good books, they're not going to care about how hard we tried. They're going to care about whether they can breathe the air and drink the water."

Jensen argues that many of the solutions to problems are self-evident, but require an honest examination of root causes embedded in our culture and a willingness to sacrifice some of our privilege.

"This is another thing that's so stupid. If you asked any reasonably intelligent child, 'How do you stop global warming caused by the burning of oil

and gas?' I think any reasonably intelligent child could give us the answer.

"You walk into the bathroom and the bathtub is overflowing and the water's going full blast and it's overflowing and getting over everything. What do you do? Do you try to come up with some incentives for people to carry water out in teaspoons? Do you try to invent some fancy high-tech solar-powered pump to pump the water out? No, you turn off the fucking water."

Jensen uses the analogy of German doctors in Nazi death camps who acted to help and make inmates more comfortable, while refusing to look at the underlying issue.

"They did everything they could except for questioning the existence of the death camp itself. And that's what we as environmentalists—and I include myself as a long-time grassroots environmentalist—that's what we do. We do everything we can to save this or that animal or this or that plant or to save this or that piece of ground. We do everything we can except the biggest and most impor-

tant thing of all which is to question the existence of the death-camp culture that's killing everything, to question industrial capitalism. You can't talk about that, because if you do then we're going to lose credibility. I'm sorry, but credibility with whom?

"One of the things that I emphasize in my work is I keep saying, 'Give me a threshold at which you fight back, give me a threshold at which you finally recognize the culture's destructive.'"

The result of our failure to address such difficult questions, Jensen says, his voice full of sadness: "We're sleepwalking to the end of the world. We're sleepwalking as they kill the world."

Waking people up, and more importantly, providing reinforcement to those who are asking such questions and acting on the answers they arrive at, is the reason Jensen continues to write.

"Who I'm really, really writing for are the activists, giving them heart, encouraging them ... to help people feel that they are not insane, that it's the culture that's insane. That all makes me really happy." ▽

## Nutrition, livers and kidneys

HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

health@viveweekly.com

We don't, when we're young and feeling okay, think much about things like liver and kidney disease, nor are we likely to connect the aches and pains that eventually do begin to plague us with diseases we're sure will trouble only those with a lifetime of bad habits under their belts. But not being heavy drinkers and avoiding viruses that like our livers are tiny parts of the equation—much that looks completely irrelevant in fact forms a much bigger part of the unhappy liver and kidney picture.

It's actually quite fitting that nutrition, liver and kidney awareness campaigns all fall in the month of March, because even though we tend to view them as unrelated, they're not. The leading causes of kidney disease—diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease—are inflammatory diseases, directly linked to what we eat, and all are becoming as common as the common cold.

Our digestive systems, when given high quality raw materials and not robbed of micro-organisms and enzymes essential to good digestion, leave little slack for our livers and kidneys to pick up—and all's well. But all is obviously not well. Incidence of liver cancer has gone up by more than 100 per cent in the past three decades, kidney cancer by about 70 per cent.

One of the less visible threads of the liver and kidney picture is the one of damage we do to the balance of protective

micro-organisms in our systems with our easy use of antibiotics. Left unchecked, that damage results in eventual overgrowth of the more resilient but less friendly critters that call our bodies home—and in less-than-optimal digestion and nutrient uptake, food intolerances, weakened immunity, and ultimately a lot of extra work for our livers and kidneys (Ninety per cent of our cells are nonhuman, they're now telling us, things like bacteria and fungi, and microbiologists are very worried about the disappearance of those that are protective.)

Once liver and kidney efficiency goes down enough with being over-worked, recirculation and eventual deposit of toxins in our joints, brains and other tissues begins—and we have inflammatory disease.

But it isn't only our use of antibiotics and other prescription medications causing trouble. The commonly used and most-recommended-by-doctors non-prescription pain remedy Tylenol is a major contributor to liver disease—acetaminophen poisoning is now the most common cause of acute liver failure in the US.

AND, SADLY, some of our preventative measures yield questionable results. We administer hepatitis B vaccines to thousands of children every year, even though young children are far more likely to suffer serious adverse reactions (neurological and immune damage, and death) than they are to come into contact with the disease (which requires blood or sexual contact for transmission). The adverse reporting system in the US registered over 17 000 adverse effects directly linked to the vaccine over an eight year period in the '90s.

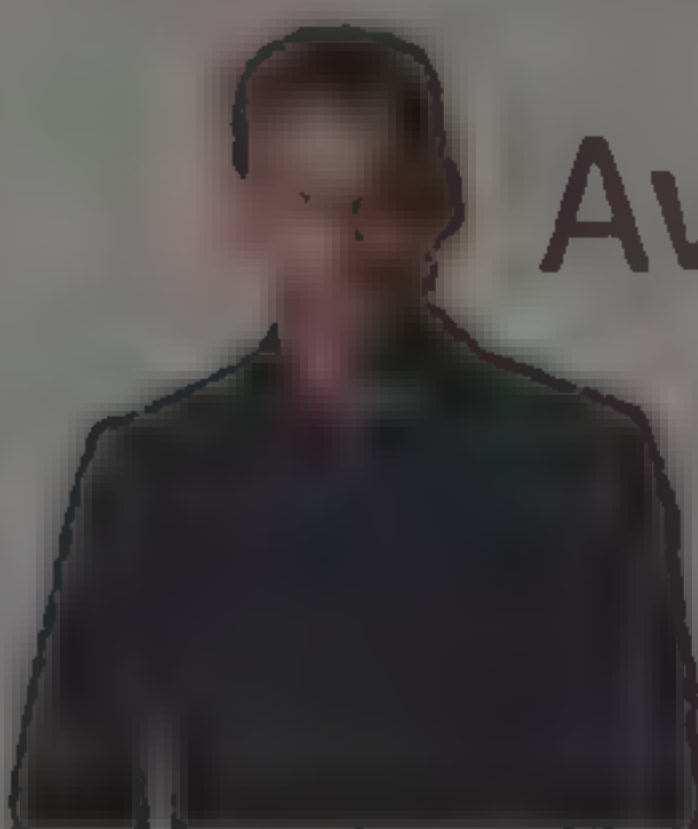
My point is that while vaccination programs may prevent some cases of hepatitis, they all too often also create a new set of problems that for some are equally devastating.

Liver and kidney disease have become problems that go way beyond infectious and other well-known risk factors—a problem intimately linked to our tendency to super-size, over-indulge, over-medicate and over-vaccinate, and to our hormone-laced, altered-fat, chemically preserved food supply, much of which Michael Pollan accurately says should not even be called food.

The good news is that our filtering systems have built-in time-to-clean alerts, letting us know when it's time to tend to them—something alternative approaches do beautifully, despite allegations of hog wash. Early warning signs of "service due" include chronic fatigue, low blood sugars, low-grade fever, muscle aches, depression and (if none of those are enough to motivate us to pay attention), loss of libido. And for those inclined to doubt flagging libido as a symptom to be heeded rather than over-ruled there is of course Viagra, and, no doubt some day soon, pink Viagra. ▽

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systems pay over the phone from a computer and the way we've gone about doing that is by setting up a media co-operative.

"The main idea is to spread the media co-op as far as possible by having local chapters in cities and communities across Canada," Jay continues. "By having a whole network as opposed to just isolated media co-ops in each city we'd be able to first of all increase the distribution of *The Dominion* substantially but also put together a grassroots reporting network that would make sure that we had a thumbnail sketch at all times of what stories are going on across Canada."

The concept, he explains, is to build a model of media ownership that is responsive and accountable to the people who have a stake in *The Dominion*—whether through producing it or reading it—rather than the corporate shareholders and advertisers who control major national media corporations.

As opposed to the more common consumer or worker co-op models, organizers have set up what they call a "solidarity co-op" to allow for three different classes of members—readers, writers and editors—giving each different rights and responsibilities while still ensuring that each can influence how the co-op functions and the kinds of issues it tackles.

It's a model, Jay says, that has few parallels in North America. "As far as we know this kind of spin on the model is pretty much unique. We've certainly seen worker co-ops that do media, but in terms of bringing the readers on board as partners and participants in a grassroots news-gathering and distribution enterprise, as far as I know it's unprecedented."

Part of the long-term goal is to bring more readers to the range of alternative media that already exists in communities across the country.

I think there's a huge amount of room for cooperation. With any of the local media co-ops ... a large part of the mandate would be to direct as much attention as possible to the independent media that already exists. So whether that's *Vue* or somebody's zine that they publish out of their basement or local blogs or whatever, that's something we want to be able to put front and centre and help promote.

What we're trying to set up is a way that independent media can both have a wide reach and be effective but also be democratically accountable and have a level of transparency that's unheard of in the corporate media." ▼

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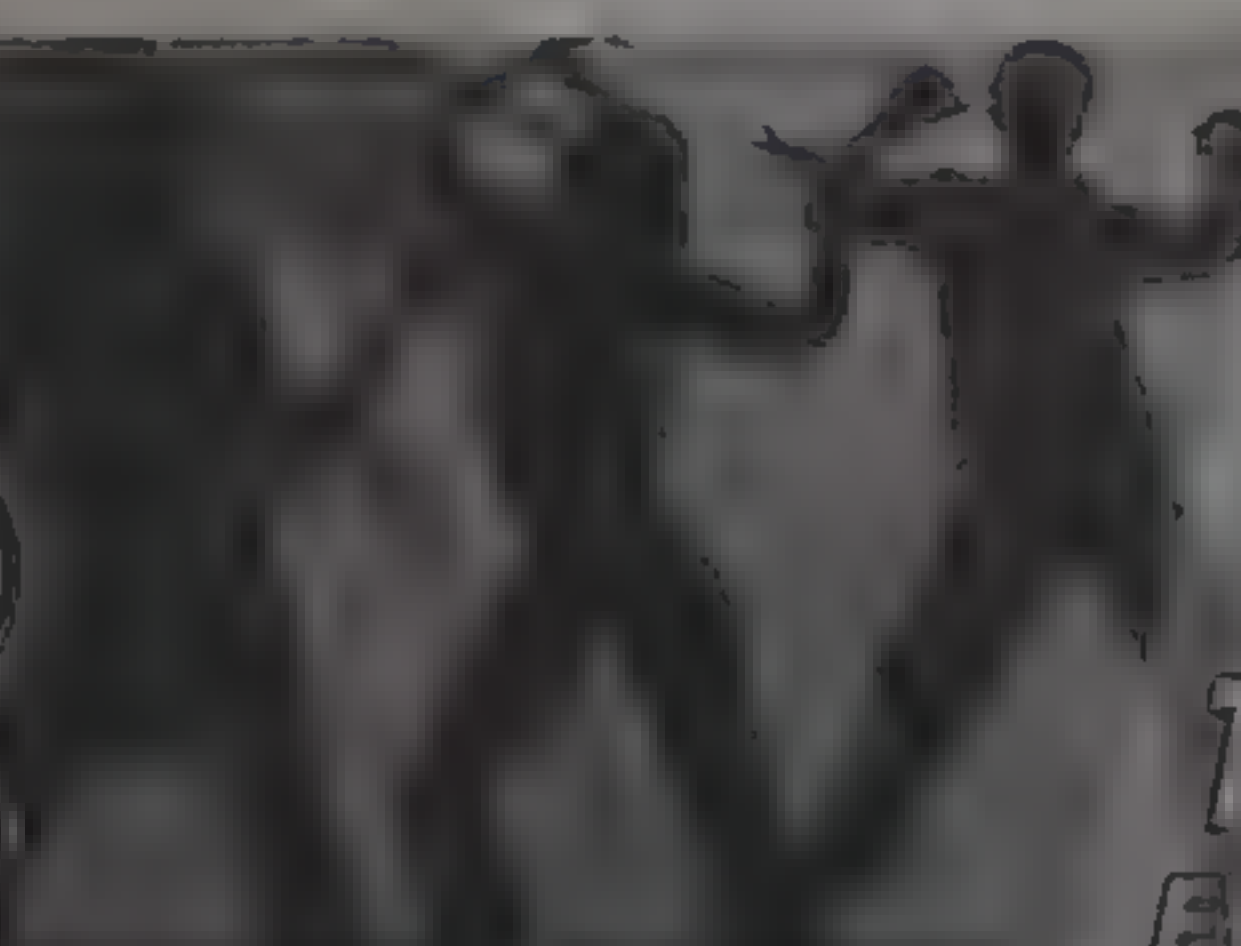


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# Time to demand more kickass mauling bears in videogames

## GAMES INFINITE LIVES

I guess it's inevitable when you live in the country and the decorating motif of your local centres around dead animals, shot-guns, farm implements and other artifacts of rugged outdoorsmanship—eventually, the conversation's going to turn to the subject of bear attacks.

You'd think this would make for an exciting roundtable of woodsy anecdotes, but too often it dissolves—first into kind of dink-measuring match as stories are swapped and our intrepid mountain-men face ever more intractable bears, ever further from civilization, in ever more terrifying circumstances, and then into an ideological impasse as stubborn lines are drawn between various bear-coping philosophies: to pepper spray or not to pepper spray, to

"make yourself big" or to "turtle up," etc.

And then there's me, city boy, thinking: "Jeez; the only bear-encounter advice I can give from personal experience is 'Run backwards, desperately shooting arrows, until the legionnaires at Fort Frostmoth notice the problem and come save your ass.'" Macho bull sessions in small-town saloons are no place for videogame survival tips.

Still, that first virtual bear encounter, courtesy of Xbox RPG *Morrowind's* "Bloodmoon" expansion—five years ago, and it still tingles fresh in my gut—remains one of my favourite in-game adrenaline moments. I was pretty cocky by the time I landed on the frozen island of Solstheim loaded with mojo gear, a veteran of countless monster battles: bonelords, vampires, alits, atronachs, packs of wild netch hounds. So when I saw a bear on the ridge, a normal animal that wasn't cursed or from hell or anything, I wasn't too scared—until it nearly mauled my head off with one swipe.

I thought that was cool, that the developers had decided that bears were going to be the scariest damn monster in their new Nordic lands. But sitting there, zoning out and nursing my Pil as one guy's long story got to the part where he's waving a flaming branch around, I found myself trying to think of other videogame bears that were similarly awesome and coming up surprisingly short.

**THE COOLEST** videogame bears, of course, are Kuma and Kuma Jr from the *Tekken* fighting games. Not only were they badass heavy fighters dueling for martial-arts supremacy in a tournament featuring an international cast of superhuman asskickers, they also added a whole new badass dimension to the character of their mentor and master, Heihachi: how awesome must a dude's kung-fu mastery be if he's capable of transmitting its inner teachings to a pair of motherfuckin' bears?

After the Kuma Family you've got a long

way to drop down the Abyss of Obscurity before you get to the next most notable game-hero bear—all the way back to 1983 and the Atari trackball arcade game *Crystal Castles*, where a little pixelly bear (Bentley) ran around gathering the titular gems while on a quest to save his lady. In the day, I thought *Crystal Castles* was awesome for three reasons: 1) the trackball control was really zippy and fun; 2) the isometric layouts faked out 3-D and were awesome; and 3) it was really weird—Bentley's main enemies were evil killer trees, and also skeletons. The fact he was a bear was just another bit of weirdness; he couldn't maul enemies or anything, though he did love him some sweet honey if he could deke out the killer bees.

The sad truth is, bears are underrepresented, and misrepresented when they do appear. In this speciesist environment, it's pathetic spectacles like *Wally Bear* that get remembered. The star of anti-drug NES game *Wally Bear* and the *NO! Gang*, *Wally*

did what so many cartoon animals did in the '80s: he put on a big pair of shades, twisted his ballcap to the side, hopped on his skateboard and started doing a "totally radical" shuck n' jive routine in the service of the zero-tolerance police-industrial state Goddamned narc sellout Uncle Smokey.

Positive bear-models are hard to come by, but they're out there. Those interested in seeing the reality of modern ursine life are invited to visit *warbears.com* and join the pleasant community of Bedtime City, a town made safe from crime and terror by the efforts of a highly-trained (and highly adorable; some stereotypes are grounded in reality) team of polar bear operatives.

Let's let the no-nonsense feral bears of "Bloodmoon" and the sophisticated techno-warriors of *Warbears* be the two polestars of a new movement. Wishing is not enough; only when enough of us stand up and demand more and better bears in videogames will the industry move away from 30 years of ignorance. ♥

## Oil in the playoffs dreamin'

### HOCKEY IN THE BOX

The Oilers continue to finish this 2008 season with much more gusto than the flaccid finale to last year's season. The team continued its inspiring run (10 wins out of the last 12 games) with a 5-2 win over Phoenix on the road, a 2-1 shootout win (yay, Fernando) over the hot San Jose Sharks and an 8-4 (!) win over Phoenix back here at Rexall. Playoffs? Can't say no yet. Or yes.

**LOG JAMMIN'** Well, here we are—so close and yet so far. As of Mar 18, the Oilers are five points short of a playoff spot with eight games left to play. Problem is, all eight of those games are against Northwest division foes, and the Oilers are a not-that-great 9-13-2 in their own division. The good news: they play two games against each team and a string of wins could put them in a good position. The bad news: all those teams are playing each other as well, so every team is bound to get some points. It's tantalizingly close but mathematically ridiculous. It may even require that they win the entire string just to get in and, even with their play as of late, that's just asking too much. In the end, my main source of entertainment is to try to imagine Ducks GM Brian Burke getting madder and madder as the once hapless Oilers keep on winning, making his first round draft pick less and less valuable. TB

**ROLL-ROLOSSON** As an old-school guy (and the mid-30s, under 40) it's nice to see that Oiler goalie Dwayne Roloson (just a year older) still has something left. His weekend run in Phoenix (facing 40 shots, letting only two goals in) and San Jose the next night (facing 49 shots, letting only one goal in) showed that the man still has something to show. This is good. The Oilers still have Roloson for another contract year. DY

**LEG-RAMMIN'** The evidence just keeps stacking up. There can really be no doubt anymore that Chris Pronger is, indeed, a jerk. This week he was suspended for stomping on the leg of Vancouver's Ryan Kesler, who was laying on the ice and helpless at the time. Classy. Of course, this kind of thing is nothing new to Mr Pronger, who has managed to compile a healthy rap sheet of eight such misdeeds over his career. Head-shots, kicking and stick infractions are also favourites of his. Although initially not punished for his stomp, the public outcry forced the NHL to re-evaluate the incident, leading to the suspension. Pronger did release a short, carefully worded apology, but not until after the final decision was released. My main beef now would have to be that the suspension is embarrassingly short. Chris Simon got 30 games earlier this year for an extremely similar incident, while Pronger will be back before the playoffs: Is it coincidence that Burke used to be the chief disciplinarian for the NHL head office? I call shenanigans! TB

**BONANZA-BURKEIN'** Every team needs a hero and a villain. Oiler fans are no different. The newest in a long line of Hans Grubers to our John McCane is Brian Burke. The Head Duck has joined Chris Pronger, Steve Smith (for a horrible moment at least), the Dallas Stars and Calgary Flames, Peter Pocklington, Jason Arnott, that guy from Houston who offered to buy/steal the Oilers, Harvey the Hound, Mick McGeough, Don Koharski and other historical Oiler foes in infamy. And, thanks to a tidbit from Andy Grabia from a great Oiler blog ([battleofalberta.blogspot.com](http://battleofalberta.blogspot.com)), here's another reason to dislike the mercurial Burke: while Burke was GM of the Hartford Whalers he banned the team's charming fight song "Brass Bonanza" from the team's rink—he considered the song silly. If you've never heard the tune, *Brass Bonanza* was sung by the team (Team 1260) during his late-evening sports show. He may play it. He loves the tune. Me too. And, considering Grabia's reaction to the factoid, so does he. DY





## Tap the powder mainline at KHMR for the ultimate adrenaline fix

BOBBI BARBARICH / bobbi@vancouverweekly.com

I've done my fair share of drugs, my favourites being the more 'natural' ones—weed and mushrooms—but I've recently changed my opinion as to the best drug you can get.

It's the most exhilarating, fist-pumping, brain-busting, not to mention the cheapest, drug you could ever dream of. And it's completely legal. Best of all, under the right circumstances, your body produces it—adrenalin. You've just gotta know where to find your hook up. I'd been seeking a connection for a while, and I finally found it at **Kicking Horse Mountain Resort**.

Despite its comparative infancy, at seven years of age Kicking Horse has a notorious reputation. Steep and deep are the two most often quoted monikers, which tend to leave families or intermediate skiers out of the equation. KH announced this winter that it is committed to "softening the on-mountain experience." It has added a blue-run access trail from CPR Ridge into Bowl Over, a massive bowl of expert terrain to skier's right of the gondola. Previous to this, a greenie could really only get down by clinging to the narrow cat-track along the ridge to the right of the gondola, intimidatingly marked by signs stating simply: cliff. KHMR's press release claims the new groomer opens some of the highest continued vertical cruising in North America.

Over the past year, KHMR has also been working hard to become a destination resort. It's added some kid-friendly features such as a village skating rink, a tubing park and a wilderness-themed shallow-slope learning area named "Horse Play Corral."

But I didn't find my fix stashed in the stable. KHMR was reporting record snowfalls earlier this season and the ski world was taking notice. Kicking Horse was chosen as the "Best Place to Catch Cabin Fever" by *Ski Canada* magazine, which also gave KHMR the nod for steeps. Needless to say, I was more than jacked to hit powder.

Unfortunately, on my first day, I ended up dodging rocks and willows and sometimes hitting more ground than snow. The hill hadn't been dumped on for ten days prior to my arrival. There were only a few skiffs of fresh on the extreme 1 260 metre vertical drop. Yet unlike a lot of hills, paying \$61 for an adult lift ticket at KHMR is totally worth the money. The terrain is unbelievable and novice skiers will have a hard time finding safe passage to the bottom.

Mid-week riding can also be a rather solitary adventure, or a chance to hang with the locals. I rode up the eight-person gondola with no more than three people at a time. My first two days at the resort were spent



### THE KICKING HORSE

tricking around with a group of boarders—what else can you do without snow? But then I met two guys willing to let me tag along on a more interesting adventure.

**THE GOLDEN EXPRESS** Gondola whisked the four of us—my friend Patrice, and new acquaintances Phil and Dave—over 3 000 metres in 12 minutes. Kicking Horse is a massive resort at 2 750 acres with relatively easy access to the backcountry. After testing our beacons, I hid my face behind my board from the late afternoon wind and we climbed along the ridge beyond the Stairway to Heaven chair.

I was in complete awe that we were within walking distance of a disgusting stash of snow. Dave, our meticulous guide, explained where to drop over a cornice. We had two choices after that: chutes to the left or right of a gnarly rock outcropping. I chose left. I scooped down and paused above the chute overlooking miles of mountains in complete silence. Picking my line, I confronted the familiar struggle: do I rip a relatively straight line, rocking from heel to toe, letting the wind tear into my ears or do I languish more slowly, making wide turns, listening to the snow crystals press past me?

I chose the latter. Snow rolled past my boots as I cut left and right, running my hand along the slope, tickling it back as it played with the butterflies in my belly. And there is the drug. The high, the adrenaline peak that rushes from the snow through your legs and up into your brain, pushing breath out of your lungs in excited exclamations.

There is nothing more potent than the silent glide across snow. It makes your fingers tingle. Your cheeks cramp from smiling. Your breath is stifled from the rush. It's quick yet so addictive, the laborious climb up to the next ridge is worth every drop of sludge that fills your thighs.

We climbed up the boot pack to Rudi's Ridge, named after Rudi Gertsch, the father of heli-skiing in Golden. His Purcell helicopter was landing just above us as we shared a Lucky beer after our ascent. Purcell Heli-skiing accesses 2 000-square kms of terrain from the appropriately named Heli-Lounge in the Discovery Centre at the village base.

"Why would someone want to take a helicopter when you can see the resort from here?" I asked rhetorically, looking at Redemption Ridge and the mini-ridge between us and KHMR. A rivulet of sweat ran down my spine.

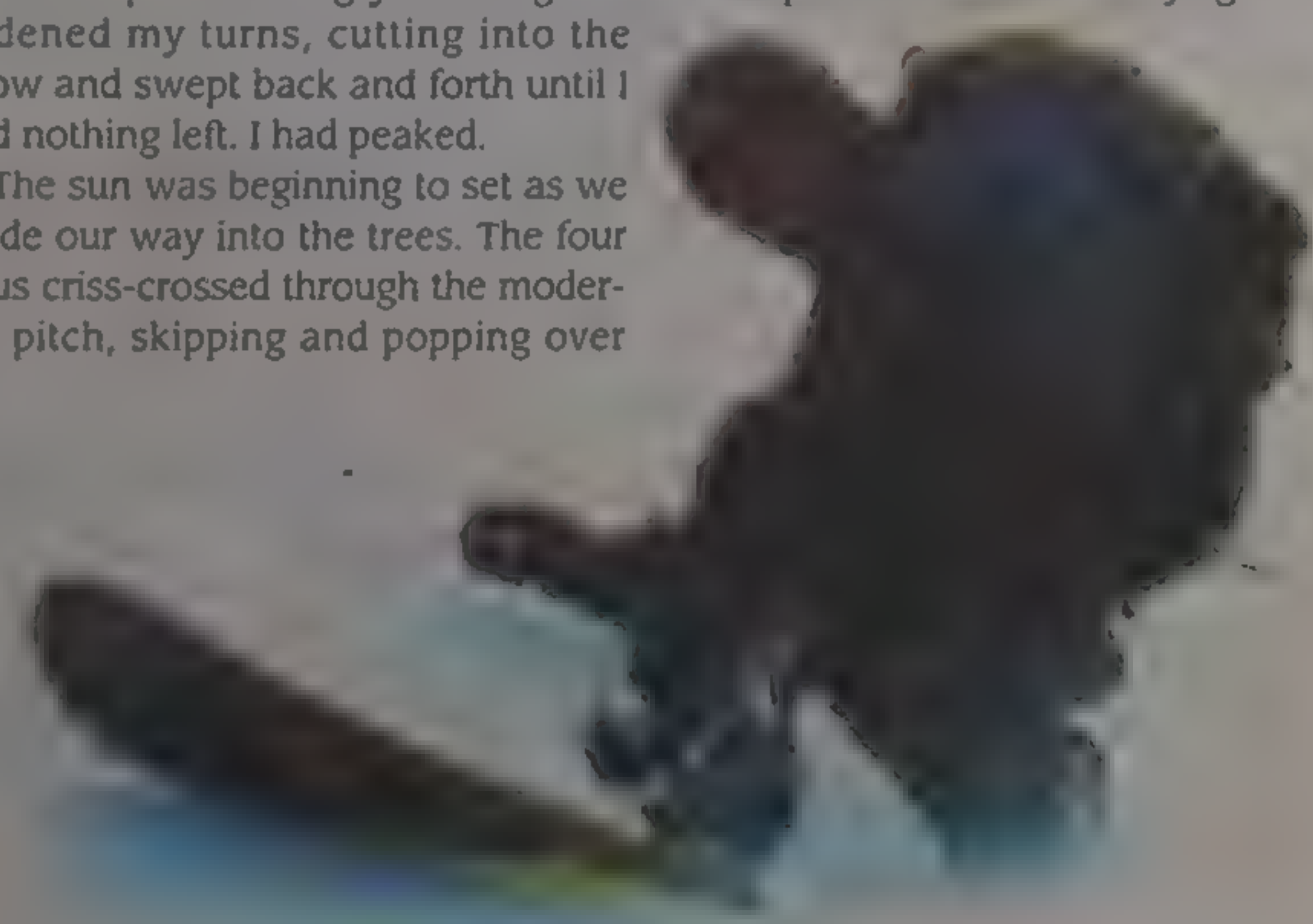
Phil read my mind. "Nothing better than a killer climb to earn your high."

**QUIET FILLED THE CANYON** as the helicopter chopped its way back to the resort. The time had come to drop again. An outcropping named Shark Fin gave us two chute routes. We watched as Dave ripped down the left of the rocks and careened far away into a sunlit meadow below. Patrice was next, choosing the same side. We lost sight of him down the chute, then he reappeared several crystal moments later beside Dave. I dropped into the wind-packed upper reach of the chute and carved to the top of the fin. I chose the right side of the outcropping. I caught my breath and held on, rocking heel-to-toe until the chute opened up to blazing yellow light. I widened my turns, cutting into the snow and swept back and forth until I had nothing left. I had peaked.

The sun was beginning to set as we made our way into the trees. The four of us criss-crossed through the moderate pitch, skipping and popping over

fallen branches, baby pines and others' tracks. We eventually came to a very long, very icy ski-out. After a ten-minute fight for my edges, we wound up at Corks restaurant just in time for their awesome afternoon special: \$10 for a pint of beer and a thin crust pizza. Damn good indeed—but make sure you get there before 6 pm.

KHMR is an incredible and challenging resort easily accessed via the Trans-Canada Highway from the east. But Kicking Horse country is a utopia of backcountry skiing, with several heli- and cat-ski operations in the area. But if you're into getting high, do it riding Shank's pony. The ride is cleaner, cheaper and far more satisfying. ▽





## CONDITIONS REPORT

### Local

Rabbit Hill — 60cm base, 8cm of new snow. All runs and lifts open.  
 Snow Valley — 60cm base, 8cm of new snow. All runs and lifts open.  
 Sun Ridge — Closed for season.  
 Edmonton Sky Club — Closed for season.

### Alberta

Canada Olympic Park — 100cm base, no new snow.  
 Castle Mountain — 104-279cm base, no new snow. 5 lifts and 61 runs open.  
 Lake Louise — 162-170cm base, 16cm of new snow. 9 lifts and 132 runs open.  
 Marmot Basin — 114cm base, 5cm of new snow. 6 lifts and 83 runs open.  
 Mt. Norquay — 60-85cm base, 6cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Nakiska — 55-109cm base, 5cm of new snow. 4 lifts and all runs open.  
 Sunshine Village — 171cm base, 11cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Tawatinaw — 60cm base, 10cm of new snow. All lifts and 23 runs open.

### B.C.

Apex — 215cm base, 32cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Big White — 257cm base, 32cm of new snow. 16 lifts and all runs open.  
 Fernie — 358cm base, 79cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Kicking Horse — 188cm base, 28cm of new snow.  
 Kimberley — 201cm base, 5cm of new snow. 5 lifts and all runs open.  
 Mt. Washington — 390cm base, no new snow. All runs open.  
 Panorama — 125cm base, no new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Powder King — 325-486cm base, 52cm of new snow.  
 Red Mountain — 220cm base, 16cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Revelstoke — 200-221cm base, 3 lifts and all trails open.  
 Silver Star — 246cm base, 35cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Sun Peaks — 172-226cm base, 27cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Whistler/Blackcomb — 243cm base, 17cm of new snow. 23 lifts and all runs open.  
 White Water — 274cm base, 23cm of new snow. All lifts and 11 runs open.

### U.S.A.

49 North — 266-360cm base, 15cm of new snow. 3 lifts and 68 runs open.  
 Big Sky — 183-272cm base, no new snow.  
 Crystal Mountain — 183cm base, 45 runs, 7 lifts open.  
 Great Divide — 89-114cm base, 4 lifts and 80 runs open.  
 Lookout Pass — 290-242cm base, 25cm of new snow.  
 Mt. Spokane — 269-356cm base, 10cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.  
 Schweitzer Mt. — 243-368cm base, 18cm of new snow. 8 lifts and 84 runs open.  
 Silver Mt. Resort — 416cm base, 20cm of new snow. 8 lifts and 73 runs open.  
 Sun Valley — 81-213cm base, 14 lifts and 87 runs open.

All conditions accurate as of March 19, 2008

## Close encounter with lynx in Jasper

JEFFREY D. BARNES / COURTESY OF JASPER NATIONAL PARK

On Sun, Mar 16, three lynxes made a rare appearance at the Portal Creek area on the main road leading down from Marmot Basin (outside the ski hill leasehold). At approximately 5 pm, Marmot Basin staff spotted the lynxes as they were leaving the hill and immediately reported the sighting to Jasper National Park officials. "We notified Parks in the interest of visitor safety and also for protection of the animals themselves," said Bob Bell, vice president of maintenance and operations at Marmot Basin.

There were three live lynxes and a fourth that had apparently been killed by one of the others. Of the three living animals there were a mother and her kitten, and a third, possibly male, who may have been the aggressor. National park warden Joe Storms says that while some animals do practice cannibalization, it is uncommon among lynxes. He also noted that in his seven years as a warden in Jasper, he's only seen one other lynx.

While several vehicles stopped to see the animals, there was no disturbance and everyone left safely. However, the sighting does serve as a valuable reminder to visitors to be respectful of the ecosystem and conscious of how they interact with animals.

Storms, the warden who responded to the call, says that in summer the parks service can respond to more than 10 "vehicle jams" in a day. While people



## SAFETY HUMANS & ANIMALS

may be fascinated by the animals, he says, they should still take basic safety precautions to avoid causing harm to themselves, to others or to the animals.

"People need to realize they're not at the zoo, animals can behave unpredictably. Ideally, the best thing is to remain in the vehicle," said Storms. If they are going to stop, he continued,

they should remember to follow basic traffic safety—use proper signals and pull to the side rather than stop in the middle of the road.

And if a person is determined to get out of the car, Storms recommends staying a couple "bus lengths" away, more if the animal is predatory. He suggests a minimum of four bus lengths for bears. With spring around the corner, it's as important as ever to consider safety when out in the wild. "Right now is mating season and the animals are wandering more," said Storms.

But in general, if you're hoping to see a lynx, he says, "Good luck." ▽

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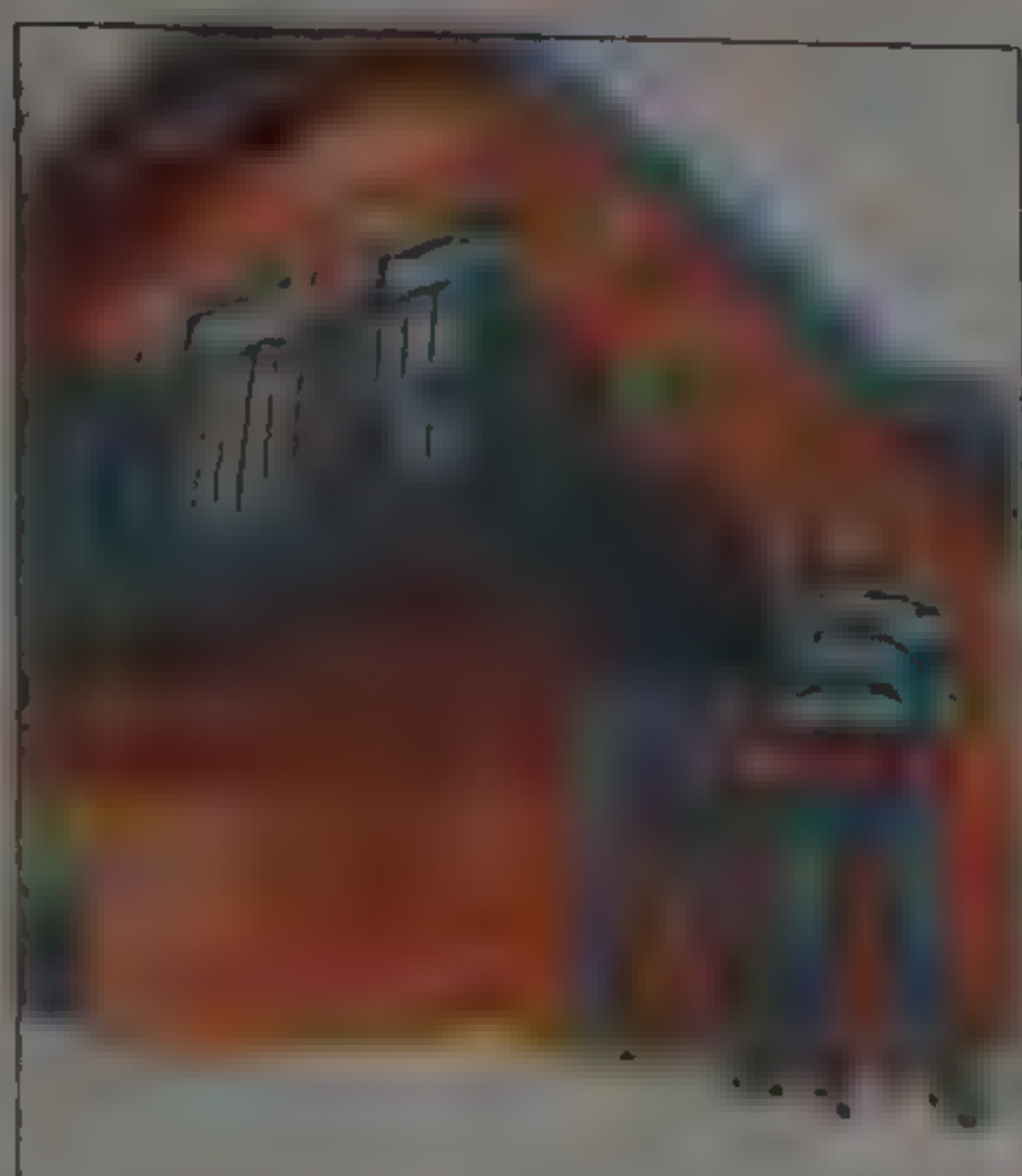


# Stay On the Caribou Hostel

**A** fascinating thing about the ski community in Western Canada is that once you start meeting people, chances are you'll meet them again. Sometimes, you run into an acquaintance years afterward at another mountain. And that's how I already knew the folks at the **On the Caribou Backpackers Hostel**.

some friends from Café Mosaics came by. Things eventually got out of hand—I donned a plush pink panther suit, the air mattress was punctured by a broken Christmas ball and the chin-up bar was privy to more than a few gropings.

It was under the chin-up bar that I met Krista Polley and Eric Feddes. Eric had blown the inebriated competition out of the Wild Turkey-laced water with 24 chin-ups. The party was shocked. And then Eric and Krista fell



off the face of the earth.

It wasn't until I arranged for a few evenings at the Caribou Hostel that I found them. Shortly after the chin-up championship, Eric and Krista bought the hostel and six acres of land 14 kms

## RIDE | ACCOMMODS

west of Golden and haven't looked back. They now live in a beautiful log and stone cabin a few feet away from an eight-site campground and a two-storey bunkhouse. I stayed in both the ground floor hostel, which sleeps six for \$25 per person per night, and in the upstairs apartment (\$60 per night).

The apartment sleeps two to four people, and has a private deck and BBQ. Both the dorm and apartment have full kitchen amenities and spacious bathrooms. But even better than the brightly colored walls, kind hosts and peaceful atmosphere is an enticing path into the woods. No more than a three-minute stumble through the dark is the Moberly Pub. Not many affordable hostels in the forest can claim that. ▽

## Free outdoor concerts at Sunshine Village



Sunshine Village has come out with details for this year's spring skiing concert series and the line-up is amazing.

The first of many rockin' weekends starts on Apr 18 - 19 when country superstar Aaron Pritchett hits the snowy slopes. The following weekend (Apr 25 - 26) ska punk band illScarlett will entertain. The next two weekends, country singers George Canyon and Red Neck Rodeo, featuring George Bamford, will perform.

On the final ski weekend of the year,

May 18-19, AC/DC tribute rockers BC/DC will close out the ski season in style. This is the ever-famous Slush Cup weekend as well, so you should be thoroughly entertained.

All concerts are staged at the mountainside of Mad Trapper's Saloon right in the heart of Sunshine Village. Daily shows will start around 2 pm, and with chairlifts operating until 4:30 pm you may even get in a run or two after but since you'll probably be hitting the refreshment stand that may not be a good idea.

There is no entrance fee except that you do need a lift ticket to get up the gondola. Sunshine does sell gondola-only passes for any non-skiers or boarders who may just want to hang out and catch the shows. ▽

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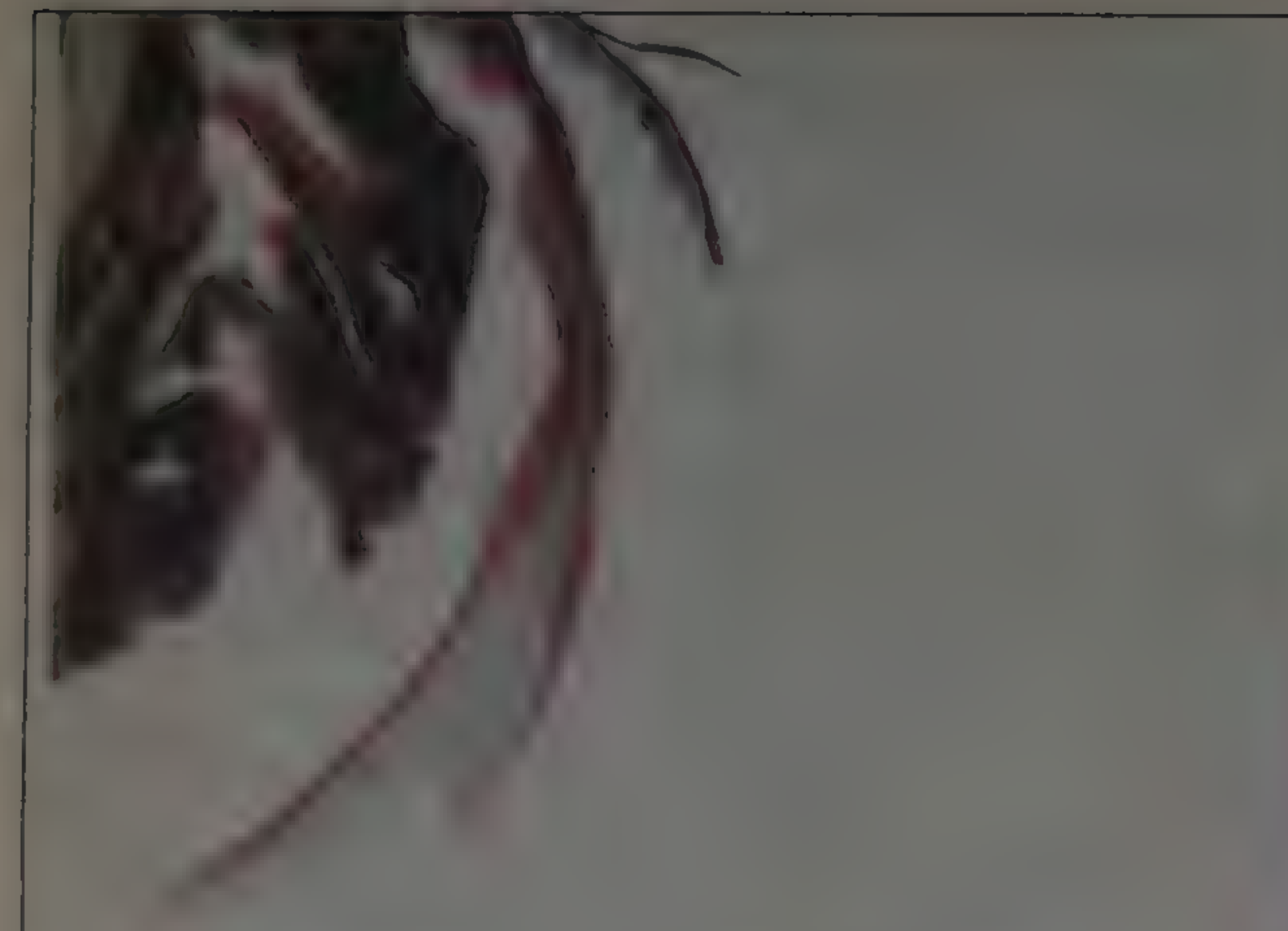
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## Some like it hot; chili-heads like it really hot

ERIN MIKALUK / [erin@vviewweekly.com](mailto:erin@vviewweekly.com)

Anyone who has browsed a grocery store over the last few years can't help but notice the shelves are practically bursting into flames. Cayenne Hot Sauce, Buffalo Style Chicken Wings and Chili-flavored Lays line the shelves, to say nothing of aisle after aisle of Thai and Indian sauces that pack a spicy punch.

But for some people, plain old "spicy" just doesn't cut it. They call themselves the "chili-heads" and they like their food hot, hot, hot. These are the people who'll travel far and wide in search of the peppers that will sear their nostrils, make their foreheads bead with sweat and push them to the brink of spicy madness. You might have met them at a party or found them among your colleagues. Maybe you even have one in your own family. Incidentally, an informal survey I conducted this week ended with one quarter of the people in the room admitting to being a lover of all things chili.

But what is the true essence of a chili-head, and are you one? Read on to find out if you meet the qualifications.

First, a chili-head is a person who enjoys the heat and flavour of chili peppers in their food. Whether it be eggs, fish, pizza, chicken wings or even fruit, a chili-head will look for ways to spice up their dish with a dash of chili flakes or a squirt of sauce.

Greg Groves, a young software

### HOT CHILI-HEADS

developer in Edmonton, has loved the flavourful punch of the chili pepper for as long as he can remember.

"Anything I can put hot sauce on is my favourite food," he says emphatically. "I mean, putting chili in your Cheerios would be ridiculous, but anything else works for me."

**FOR GROVES, AND MANY** others, being a chili-head is not about scorching tastebuds. Instead, it's about finding that perfect balance between just making something hot and creating a unique taste sensation that adds new dimensions to a dish.

"When people see hot sauce they tend to get macho. They think, 'I can do this' and eat the hottest pepper they can," chides Groves. "I'm not trying to burn my mouth off. I want a kick, but it has to be tasty." He also admits it's a bit of an addiction.

Some may crave booze or cigarettes, but chili-heads crave their capsaicin, which is derived from capsicum—the source of all things hot, such as jalapeños and habañeros (the world's hottest chili peppers). The amount of capsaicin is measured in Scoville units which weigh how hot something actually is. Scoville units are a useful tool for chili-heads and help ensure that they're buying a hot sauce that will actually measure up to their standards and not leave them

with a weak imitation that could just as easily pass for ketchup.

Bill Donahue, a self-proclaimed chili-head, is well versed in the measurement of Scoville units.

"5000 scovilles would be your average jalapeño, whereas the habañero would measure 300 000," he explains. "But, there are people out there creating hot sauces that pack eight million scovilles—one eye-dropper of that stuff would take out an army camp."

Chili-heads feed their tongue-burning capsaicin addiction from all over the globe. Places like Mexico and India are viewed as the king pins of all things chili, and a chili-head's trip is never complete without a saucy purchase. Luckily for other members of the condiment cult, chili-heads are also a generous bunch: sauce collections are built by swapping new finds and sharing tips on where to find the best variety of chili products—a very good thing, as the variety of hot sauces number in the thousands and each change the taste of food in a new way.

**YOU HAVE YOUR** chipotle sauce, which adds a smoky flavour. You have your passion fruit- or mango-based sauces, which add a new fruity dimension to any bread or plainly flavoured food. Of course, you also have your over-the-top, tongue-scorching hot sauces, which zing flavour into your blandest of dishes. There are also tomato-, mustard- and fruit-based sauces, each with a unique twist of flavour to



accompany any food—and each with a name more colourful than the last.

"People like choice in flavour, but the weirder the name, the more people buy the sauce," says Donahue. And with names like "Dr Phart-pounder's Colon Cleaner," "Satan Sweat," "Fire in the Hole" and "Ass in the Tube," it's clear that sauce manufacturers are catering to the creative senses of their chili-eating market.

Manufacturers are also using other means to feed the fiery food frenzy, with many products being aimed and advertised exclusively to chili-heads. There are chili-head t-shirts, recipe books and magazines and products highlighting various levels of capsaicin added to boost taste.

A spicy diet is also being touted as having added health benefits. Not only can hot sauce reinvigorate bland diet food with zest and spice, but studies have reportedly shown capsaicin as being good for the health of your coronary arteries, an effective appetite suppressant and, surprisingly, a treatment for ulcers. Not bad bene-

fits for adding a little zing to your diet!

**HOWEVER, EVEN WITH** the health benefits, you should be careful about jumping on the chili-head train and piling on the hot sauce! Like other addicts and their vices, even chili-heads have been known to "overdose" after consuming extremely hot sauce.

"You turn white and can't breathe," explained a friend of mine, a hardcore chili-head who carries a case of at least 15 chili sauces everywhere he goes. Fortunately, he has found a cure—and no, it's not water. "Dairy products," he says, "particularly in the liquid form like milk or yogurt, are the best antidote for too much chili."

Risk of overdosing aside, spicy food is hotter than a chili pepper right now. Organizations of chili-heads have sprung up across the country, allowing new and budding fans of hot sauces to find and enjoy new friendships and acquaintances. From online discussion groups to blogs to newsletters to fiery food events you can find them any-

where and everywhere, from Canada down to Mexico and back again.

So, if you enjoy the heat of a good salsa and love the sweat caused by a good habañero pepper then you, my friend, may be a chili-head—and you are far from alone!

If not and you're interested in spicing up your life a bit, why not pick up a bottle of hot sauce from your local grocery store and add a dash to your next meal?

"Cholula sauce (with the wooden topper) is one of my favourites. That or Yucatan," reveals Groves.

You can also give some hot sauce a go while out on the town, but be careful what you say or you might get more than you bargained for.

"My trick for getting the level of spice I like when I dine out is to insult the chef!" laughs Donahue. "I tell the server it's too weak and send it back with the orders to put some real heat on this thing, and viola, the dish comes back just the way I like it—packed to the brim with heat."

Spoken like a true chili-head. ▾

## FOOD NEWS! DISH WEEKLY

### M4S TEQUILA

Next Thu, Mar 27, deVine Wines steps a little bit out of its purview to offer up a tasting of some of Mexico's finest tequila. Spike Maynard from Harvest Vintage Imports will be on hand to provide tastings of two of the finer tequilas Mexico has to offer. Considering full bottles normally retail for more than \$100, this is a perfect opportunity to have a sip of what tequila is supposed to taste like. Visit [devinewines.ca](http://devinewines.ca) for more info.

*Dish Weekly spills the beans on culinary events in Edmonton. Have an event our city's gourmand community should know about? Just send us an e-mail at [dish@vuwweekly.com](mailto:dish@vuwweekly.com).*



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**SAMUEL ADAMS BOSTON LAGER**  
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I know the lines of Great Head are often devoted to extolling the virtues of rare, complex and sometimes experimental beers. That's a good thing: it allows *Vue* readers to explore the further reaches of beer. But I also know that most beer drinkers are looking for a clean, not too sweet, not too hoppy pale lager. My talk of clove, peppery spices, grassy hops and other descriptors may not appeal to all. I respect that.

In honour of beer drinkers looking for an honest, yet well-crafted brew, I offer you Samuel Adams Boston Lager, the flagship product of the Boston Beer Company. Boston Beer's owner, Jim Koch, belongs on the vanguard of the American craft brewing movement. He opened the company in 1984, making him one of the first microbrewers on the continent, at a time when the big boys owned the market shelves. He had heritage on his side though: his grandfather owned a small brewery in the 1870s. Samuel Adams Boston Lager (named after one of the fathers of the US Constitution) was his first beer.

And did he ever strike gold. He, and handful of others, spawned a new era in beer production, introducing American beer drinkers to a new variety of well-made beers. Over the past 20 years, Boston Beer Company has grown to be the largest craft brewery in the US, behind only the big three of Anheuser-Busch, Coors and Miller in terms of sales and production. Their Sam Adams line is some of the most decorated in international beer competitions

**SAM ADAMS**



is a very attractive beer: medium gold with a bright, substantial head and brilliant clarity. The aroma is subtly sweet, with some rich toastiness and just the faintest hint of caramel.

The flavour is mischievous. It starts with a pleasant sweetness, providing some toastiness, some caramel and some pilsener grainy sweetness. The malt comes entirely from barley; this beer clearly has no rice or corn added to it, additives used by big brewers to lighten body and reduce cost.

The sweetness starts to dissipate and the admirable cleanliness of the beer comes through. It has no odd

tastes or extra esters. It is soft and crisp. Then at the end, a rounded, floral hop flavour and bitterness sneaks up a bit. Not too much, just enough to dry the beer out and add some complexity. It is not a bitter beer—balanced is a more appropriate word.

Sam Adams belongs firmly in the pale lager class, but demonstrates the kind of heights this humble style can reach. It's one of those rare beers that can be appreciated by both kinds of beer drinkers, the casual and the more discerning drinker alike. It's good enough, in fact we can forgive it's named after an American patriot. ♥

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# The Noodle House so nice they named it twice

JAN HUSTYN / jan@vancouverweekly.com

I've always thought of myself as a fairly quick reader. Not *Harry Potter* and the *Deathly Hallows* in a day quick, but certainly speedy enough. But that belief came in to question on a visit to **Thanh-Thanh Oriental Noodle House**. Having been handed a hefty menu filled with numerous pages, each outlining copious options, I settled into my comfy chair for a leisurely perusal.

Within the space of about 15 minutes, my husband and I were approached at least seven times by three different people, each asking if we were ready to order. I was starting to get a complex about my inferior reading skills when I noticed that other people around us would walk in and order almost immediately. Menus were briefly consulted, if at all, and then simply set aside. The light bulb went on. Thanh-Thanh's clientele must include a lot of regulars, people who walk in already knowing what they want. Not being a regular, I did need to read the menu.

We did place a partial order on one of the many early visits, for two Tsingtaos (\$4.45 each). Then we relaxed, leisurely sipped our light-tasting beer and examined the menu in detail, smiling and shaking our heads "no" whenever someone approached us. Had there been a lineup of ravenous customers glaring at us in hopes of securing our table, I

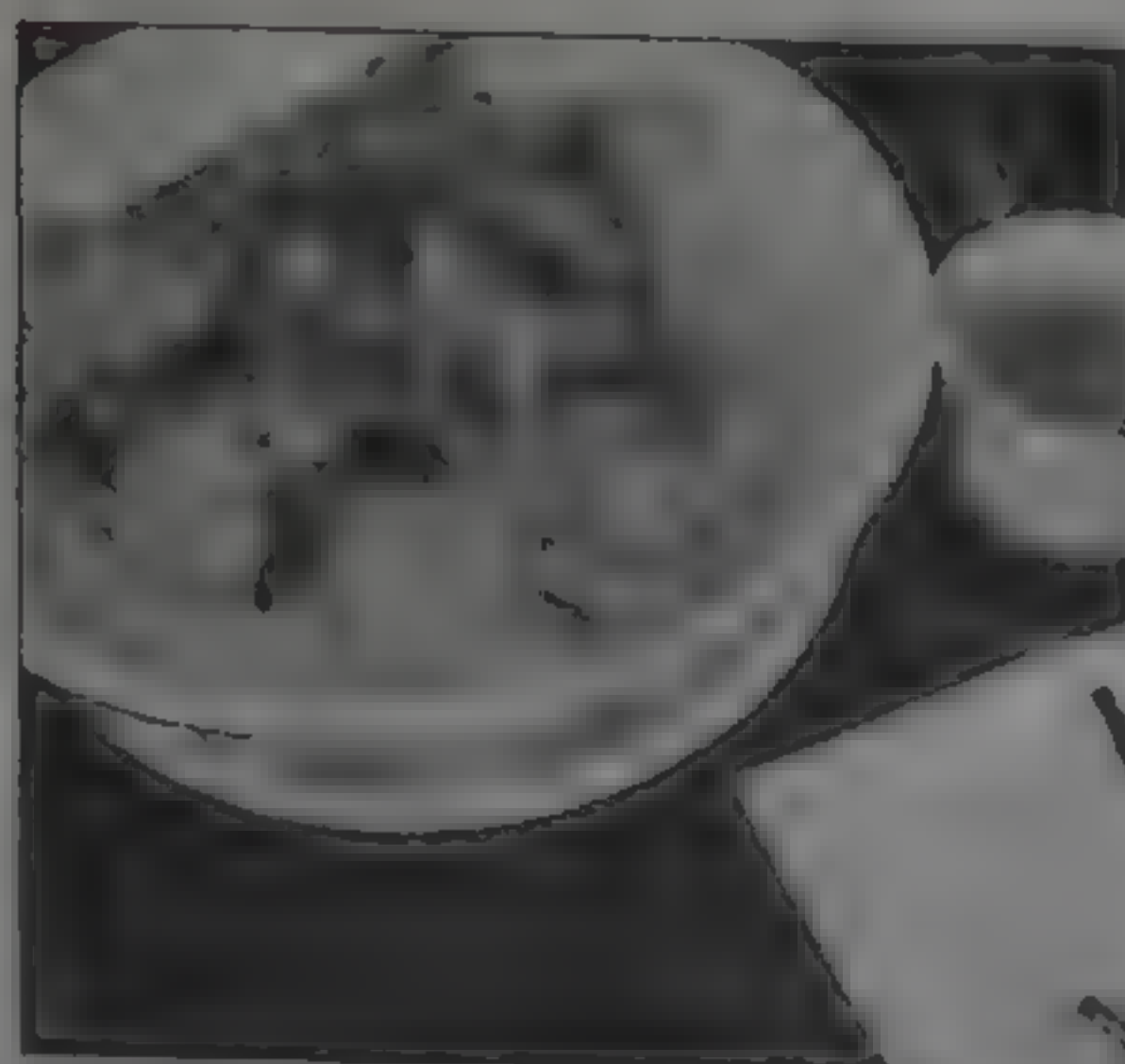
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would have felt pressured to order quickly. Only a few tables were occupied, though, and since we weren't encroaching upon closing time, I felt no remorse at my apparent tardiness.

Reading the menu was only the first step. Then we had to make some decisions. My husband always has to have beef and broccoli (\$12.45) whenever possible, so that was easy, and since I have a weakness for veggies in a sauce of any kind, we went with stir-fried vegetables in black bean sauce (\$10.95). The big dilemma was whether to order pho (a noodle soup) or a vermicelli bowl. This particular night seemed to call for a vermicelli bowl and we went all out and ordered one topped with grilled shrimp, chicken and pork and a couple of imperial rolls (\$12.95). We finished by ordering some steamed rice (\$2) to soak up all the delectable sauce.

ONCE WE ORDERED, things progressed quickly. A teapot, a couple of tea cups and side plates were promptly plunked on the table. The tea was warm and soothing; it provided a unique taste sensation when alternated with the cold



and refreshing beer. Given our surroundings, it seemed only appropriate to be sipping such contrasting beverages.

On the surface, Thanh-Thanh gives off a modern, almost polished aura. The clean, simple, black-and-cream décor is muted by earthy terracotta tiles; comfy chairs incorporate all three colours, tying everything together nicely. Tropical palm trees stretch toward the ceiling, breaking up the uniformity of the tables. A huge Buddha graces the open room, quietly welcoming and overseeing everything. Visually, the effect is almost serene, if somewhat stark.

Don't be fooled by the initial impression of tranquility. The bar, centered at the back of the restaurant, is much like Grand Central Station. On the surface it looks like just a bar but it serves as so much more: ice cubes clatter, glasses clink, plates clank, everything and

anything bangs. The noise accomplished by a handful of people was quite impressive. It was kind of amusing to watch, once I got over the shock of the din. I couldn't imagine how noisy it would be if the restaurant was even close to being full.

Our beef and broccoli made its way to the table first, accompanied by a bottle of soy sauce. The indispensable little pot of chili paste already had a perpetual place of honour on all the tables. The platter was filled with loads of crisp, green broccoli, tender slices of beef and a moderate amount of runny sauce. While everything was cooked properly, the taste of sesame oil dominated the dish.

In short order, the vermicelli bowl, accompanying fish sauce and mixed veggies landed at our now extremely cramped table. Just as we were about to load up our plates (most people order a vermicelli bowl for themselves but we're not like most people—we share and dig out what we want), one of our servers came by and took our "light" (candle); it never made it back. Somewhat odd, but the extra smidgen of space it freed up came in handy.

AS ENORMOUS and impressive as the vermicelli bowl looked, I was immediately drawn to the hefty chunks of glorious broccoli, snow peas, carrots, mushrooms, bok choy and cauliflower that made up the mixed veggies. Flecks of tiny beans from the liberal

dousing of black bean sauce could be seen mingled throughout the colourful jumble. Perfectly cooked, tender but still crisp, it was how veggies were meant to be eaten. I could eat this for dinner every night.

I took a break from gorging on the veggies to claim some of the rapidly disappearing vermicelli bowl. A couple of scoops and I had a mound of soft slippery noodles, crisp carrots and lettuce, crunchy bean sprouts, salty peanuts and mild green onions taking center stage on my plate. I perched a succulent grilled shrimp and some gently charred but tender chicken and pork on top, drizzled the whole thing with fish sauce and smiled. Soft merged with crunchy, vibrant with mellow, salty with subdued. The house-made fish sauce was vibrant without being overpowering; it complemented and accented without masking and overwhelming.

Both of the imperial rolls that I had briefly glimpsed snuggled against the side of the bowl were already being digested inside a stomach that was not my own. I can't personally vouch for how good they were, but their speedy departure speaks volumes.

As we made our way to the door, I glimpsed a lucky fellow savouring an enormous bowl of pho. Maybe that's what I'll order next time. I might be a tad quicker deciding, but there are still too many tempting options for just a brief perusal. ▽

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# The experiment moves through two looking glasses, darkly

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vueweekly.com

Tim Rechner and Fish Griwowsky are fixtures on Edmonton's creative scenes, the former an artist/musician/ArtsHab resident and the latter a writer/photographer/cartoonist/quasi-documentarian. Rechner and Griwowsky's works have been alongside each other in guerrilla art actions peppering construction sites, but their shared ARTery show illuminates common arcs of obsessive process while each artist pushes into a totally different visual realm.

*The experiment* takes its title from the piece that inaugurated Griwowsky's 3D photographic explorations, a composite snapshot of an ex-lover taken from two angles and digitally tinted with overlapping hues to recreate stereoscopic depth once magic glasses are slipped over the eyes.

"The pictures are a passage through time, slightly," Griwowsky explains. "It started with this kind of 'that-was-then' narrative."

Griwowsky refined his 3D technique and integrated it with his reflexive interactions with the world through the mediating omnipresent eye of his camera (evidence of photomania: zardex.com). His half of the experiment takes this idea of stacked moments beyond individual pieces, loosely following the development of his 3D practice. From the originating photo, hung deep in the ARTery's backroom, images march one after another, ascending in size as they progress into the spacious front gallery. As dimensions increase, views broaden: smaller shots generally encompass little things like an assembly of tiny plastic bulls pulled from



necks of wine bottles or bric-a-brac on hooks in a shop; larger images show the northern mouth of the High Level Bridge or a culminating vista of mountaintops. There are exceptions—people inhabit intimate shrunken worlds, sparingly, almost as objects.

"I think of these all as landscapes," Griwowsky suggests. "It's about 3D journalism—it doesn't exist, hasn't taken off yet, but it's coming. I'm getting in while I can."

**WITHOUT 3D GLASSES**, the photos have a spooky ethereality, a kind of grey-tinged non-nostalgia: they offer the jolt of an image retrieved from childhood or a long-ago dream,

attached to a strong emotion but minus golden glow and any tether to historical narrative, which makes them feel oddly simultaneously innocent but alienated.

Glasses on, the lapse in time makes them imperfectly ghostly, though the 3D illusions function, becoming more dramatic as the work scales up. Hovering like a mirage, they manifest as the landscapes Griwowsky conceived them to be.

It's impossible not to feel the tug of 1950s Cold War paranoia, the murmur of creature-features and Things That Came From Somewhere Else-ness conjured up by the very idea of 3D. These films were largely about a cor-

VIZ ARTS

UNTIL SAT, APR 26  
(VIEWINGS THU 5:30 - 7 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT)  
**THE EXPERIMENT**  
WORKS BY TIM RECHNER & FISH GRIWOWSKY  
CURATED BY ANDREA L. LEVINSKY  
THE ARTERY (9535 JASPER AVE)

ruption of the idyllic, and it's hard not to connect that shame and fear to current optimistic rhetoric swaddling us from a shadowy category error of a war manufactured to enrich oil and security thugs and the looming threat of environmental destruction. And Griwowsky is prescient: 3D films are returning to theatres, new technology with old motifs.

In contrast, Rechner's work inhab-

its his own interior universe, occupying the east side of the gallery while Griwowsky's photos parade opposite. In the grand main space, an entire wall papered with Rechner's drawings faces the largest 3D images. Scores of small black ink scrawls on greyish-white pages provide a busy floor-to-ceiling background for large vibrantly coloured spiky shapes on buttercream paper.

"I think of the whole wall as one piece," Rechner states. "I'm still interested in covering spaces, in architecture and installation. This shows five months of progression, but in a jumbled way."

Rechner's an abstractionist who longs for the spontaneous preconscious. The larger pieces derive from his compulsive drawing practice, shapes pulled out and worked more formally in searingly vivid hues and forms evoking a compressed graffiti or alien biological thing splayed on a microscope slide. His small drawings are their source—his everyday obsessive drawings, these ones accumulated from the early winter.

"These have a different process than before," Rechner points out. "More instinctive and automatic—I was doing these without seeing the page. The initial concept of drawing blind was to get me back to a more honest, child-like state, before the burden of education."

Mushrooms and hookahs aren't included in the experiment, but aren't needed as diverging hallucinatory worlds play out sharply against each other, manipulating scale and time in process and arrangement as they venture through different looking glasses. ▽

# There's some feck-freckled comedy in them thar *Lonesome West*

PAUL BLIMOV / blimov@vueweekly.com

There's a strange balance of tragedy and comedy running through Martin McDonagh's *The Lonesome West*: the script paints a grim worldview, set in a town where murder and suicide are common, and then sinks an extra level by focusing on two brothers who do their best to ruin the other's day, everyday. It's a vulgar script, freckled with "fecks," multiple characters' drinking problems, and a 17-year-old girl who supplies the town with moonshine. But it's funny. Really funny. And it seems like the darker it gets, the deeper the laughter becomes.

Valene (Collin Doyle) and Coleman (James Hamilton) are two bickering brothers, whose already volatile relationship becomes even more acidic after their father's accidental death. Valene is left everything in the will and is more than happy to forego fra-

REVUE

UNTIL SUN, MAR 23, 8 PM  
**THE LONESOME WEST**  
DIRECTED BY JULIEN ARNOLD  
WRITTEN BY MARTIN McDONAGH  
STARRING CHRIS BULLOUGH, COLLIN DOYLE,  
CLARICE ECKFORD, JAMES HAMILTON  
THE ROXY THEATRE (10708 - 124 ST), \$15 - \$25

ternal compassion in a time of grieving by marking all of his belongings with a possessive, "hands-off V."

Doyle and Hamilton reprise their feuding roles with wonderfully combustible onstage chemistry. The script has them launching into arguments as soon as they share an onstage moment, and they tackle the bitter battles with gusto. The pair makes their potentially one-dimensional rivalry completely believable, using their fantastic sense of comedic timing to keep the darkness tolerable.

There's a point when the audience is aware of a certain stove-related incident before the characters are, but nobody onstage rushes the moment: the tension bubbles over into audience laughter as the actors bask in their onstage naiveté, and each step towards their realization is a golden moment.

**ORBITING THE BROTHER'S LIVES**

Father Welsh (Chris Bullough), the town's weepy priest who assigns himself the ultimate feat of bringing the brothers together, and Girleen (Clarice Eckford), the 17-year-old booze-seller with a rancid vocabulary.

Bullough and Eckford make ample contributions to their roles. Bullough's Father Welsh plays his tragically weepy good-guy well, fleshing out his vain struggle to reconcile the two resiliently opposed siblings. Eckford probably has the best sense of comic

timing among the cast, though her limited role means that the comedic ~~bits of her character~~ remain untapped—a shame, as her first-act appearance is an early highlight.

There's a lot of violence, swirling between and around the characters, but for every dark happenstance, there's a humorous line or incident that steers the script away from reaching slit-your-wrists levels of depression. *The Lonesome West* is a terrifically balanced script; McDonagh creates his world with equal parts over-the-top madness and biting comedy: the brothers' shared mantle place is adorned with a picture of Jesus, hanging just above a loaded shotgun. Below those lie a number of religious figurines, but those are merely used as another source of conflict for the brothers: who's more religious? Who's going to heaven? Neither of them think it's big

enough for the both of them.

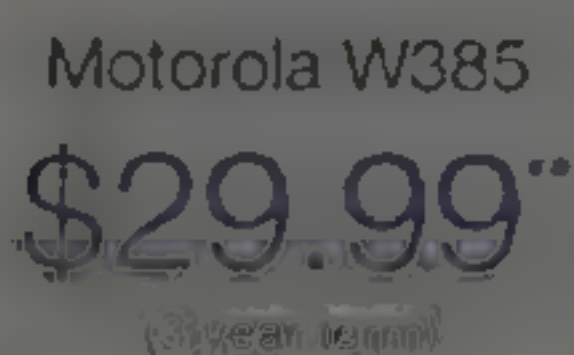
While the script walks a narrow passage between chuckles and shudders, it's Julien Arnold's magnified vision that lights the way. Though this run of *The Lonesome West* marks his professional directing debut, it's the veteran actor's second time directing the play, and, having also performed a different McDonagh script, Arnold seems to possess a heightened familiarity with the playwright's wry sense of humour, and this particular show. It's a long piece, and he makes sure every element fits snugly together as the show zooms along.

*The Lonesome West* works so well because of its promising script explored to the fullest through raw performances and expert guiding vision. It may present a perfectly bleak world, but it injects almost every moment of darkness with a flare of comedy to lighten the way. ▽



A photograph of two blue tang fish swimming in a tank. They are surrounded by several smaller, reddish-orange fish. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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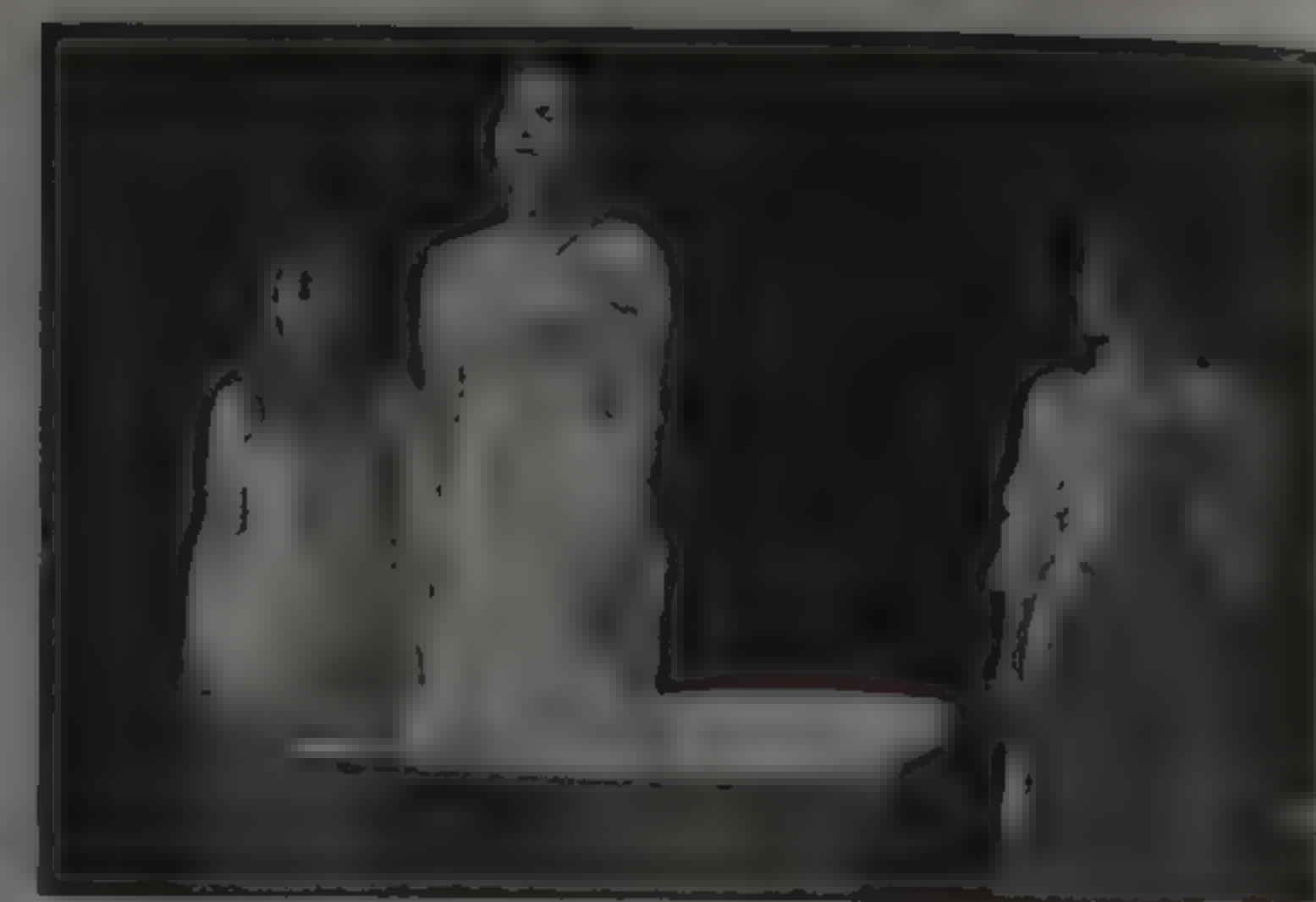
DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

If we needed any proof that we shouldn't be content to let our young, up and coming theatre artists ply their trades almost exclusively on the Fringe circuit, **The Drowning Girls** could be one of our best bets. I haven't seen the original Fringe show—1999 is an awfully long time ago—but there's simply no way for a Fringe show to pull off the polish of this remount, and the show is that much more alive for its polish.

The play opens with three showerheads dangling like string light bulbs over three carefully arranged baths. Occupying a waterproof grid, the baths soon burst forth with three different brides (Beth Graham, Vanessa Sabourin and Natascha Girgis), the three victims of the Brides in the Bath Murderer, a nefarious sort who spent the early 1900s seducing, robbing and killing women.

Gradually, they each begin to reveal their stories, though there are common threads to all of them: getting swept off their feet, pulling away from their family and, most importantly, escaping the crippling fear that they might grow up to be old maids in an era that wasn't particularly kind even to married women. If the play has a fault, it's that it doesn't go much beyond simply relating these stories: the old maid aspect is brought up, but there's not a lot of suggestion as to how, if at all, the stories of these women might hold relevance to gender relations, or anything else, today. Writers Graham, Daniela Vlaskalic and Charlie Tomlinson seem content simply to tell this story, and while it's compelling, it would have been nice to see them dive a bit deeper into some of the issues the women bring up.

**STILL, IF YOU'RE JUST** going to tell the stories, you could scarcely have found three better women to do it. Graham, playing the youngest of the three (absolutely shocking, I know), brings a bouyant naïvete to the role, a wide-



PREVIEW

UNTIL SUN, MAR 23 (8 PM)

### THE DROWNING GIRLS

DIRECTED BY CHARLIE TOMLINSON

WRITTEN BY BETH GRAHAM, DANIELA VLASKALIC, TOMLINSON

STARRING GRAHAM, VANESSA SABOURIN, NATASCHA GIRGIS

CATALYST THEATRE (8529 GATEWAY BV), \$15/\$18

eyed excitement that fits perfectly in a character so swept off her feet she can't see what's so obviously in front of her face. Sabourin, by contrast, is equal parts rebelliousness and hopelessness, a society woman who seems to go along with her murderous husband as much to stick it to her family as to escape the shame of spinsterhood. She brings a palpable amount of depth to a role that's given the shortest shrift of three, enough so that it would have been nice to have explored her character more thoroughly.

Still, that aside, Girgis is the highlight here. Pretty much indisputably an old maid even before she finds her man, she's naked about her reasons for marrying—desperation, essentially—but Girgis handles her character with a dry weariness that manages to be both touching and funny (the latter quite frequently). Like the play, her performance doesn't provoke a lot of deeper questions, but manages to sparkle enough that it doesn't really matter. ▀

## Half Life plays it too nice and easy

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

Last October, novelist Stephen Marche wrote a shit-disturbing article in the *Toronto Star* about the faults of Canadian fiction. One of his particular bones of contention was with McClelland and Stewart Publisher Ellen Seligman's pronunciation that "[she doesn't think] prizes are for young writers": for Marche, this comment was indicative of "boomer self-congratulation" spreading through Canadian literature, an attitude that is in danger of turning Canlit into the stale milquetoast of English fiction.

Now, Marche was referring specifically to literature (and more specifically to the Giller), but it's hard not to hear that criticism ringing while sitting through **Half Life**, John Mighton's 2005 Governor General Award Winner. It's not exactly bad, but if this was honestly the best Canadian drama had to offer in 2005, it's a genre that seems well worth ignoring.

The play centres around Donald (Richard Clarkin), the son of decreasingly lucid nursing home resident Clara (Carolyn Heatherington). When she falls in love with another resident at the home, the cantankerous Patrick (Eric Peterson), Donald is forced to confront the fact his mother, even in her damaged state, is an adult making her own decisions about how she wants to spend her life.

**IT'S A PLOT** that's sure to become a lot more prevalent as the boomers near their own spin in the nursing home, but from this relatively rich soil, Mighton doesn't exactly pull anything new or exciting. The humour, which is unfortunately

PREVIEW

UNTIL SUN, MAR 30 (7:30 PM)

### HALF LIFE

DIRECTED BY DANIEL BROOKS

WRITTEN BY JOHN MIGHTON

STARRING CAROLYN HEATHERINGTON,

ERIC PETERSON, RICHARD CLARKIN

CITADEL THEATRE, \$43 - \$68

abundant, is strictly sitcom: jokes about randy old guys (which also do a half-decent job of sabotaging any real sympathy with Patrick) and overly sensitive men are the highlights. Most of Mighton's "deeper" subjects—artificial intelligence, the nature of memory—feel glommed on rather than truly explored, the kinds of things you need in a script it to get it serious GG attention.

That said, Mighton's script isn't helped a whole lot by the cast here. Though Heatherington is a commanding presence, holding your attention even while hunched over a chair or prone in a bed, her two major partners here are sorely overshadowed. Peterson doesn't rise much above a broad, sour-faced coot, good for a pissed-off one-liner, but not for the man who Clara is supposed to be falling in love with. Clarkin, on the other hand, is painfully wooden: the script obviously calls for this academic to be somewhat standoffish and socially awkward but this goes entirely too far—during one scene where he takes a Turing test, it's honestly hard to tell which one's the computer.

The play does have its moments, and over all—thanks largely to Heatherington—you do feel for Clara's inevitably doomed relationship. Still, far too much of *Half Life* is aged fiction: safe, broad and easy on its audience. ▀



# Karen Trask's *Warm Snow* drifts between information ages

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vancouverweekly.com

As our understanding of the physical sciences deepened in the mid-20th century and we discovered more about forces governing our supremely strange and beautiful universe, language used to describe cosmic events shifted. Physicists engaged in the biggest of the Big Questions—the nature, origins and eventual death of our expanding universe—often framing discussions in terms of the ultimate fate of information. Does information escape black holes? In the dusk of the universe, galaxies pulled so far apart they're invisible to each other, would any remaining inhabitants be able to gather information to decipher what had been? How do we interpret information the universe offers us in the form of light and force and matter?

Near the tail of the Victorian era, eminent British astrophysicist Arthur Eddington defined an elegant theory as describing a given phenomenon while being simple enough for a barmaid to grasp. Those days are gone—the upheaval of the classical worldview throughout the last century took the universe further from the layperson, into arcane specialties, beautiful too, but nevertheless not the eternal velvet heavens we once thought we knew.

And yet the language of physics inspires and moves. We're creatures imbued with a thirst for metaphor, and while that can lead to gross misreadings of the natural world and

misappropriations of scientific ideas—like when the author of *The Secret* claims we can wish money into our pockets because of the quantum principle of entanglement, or when post-modern constructionists believe they can pick and choose physical reality—

fragments can snag in our minds, and by playing with meaning and exploring our associations we deepen our understanding of ourselves.

**MONTREAL-BASED ARTIST** Karen Trask bridges these disparate areas of

VIZ ARTS

UNTIL SAT, APR 12  
**WARM SNOW**  
BY KAREN TRASK  
SNAP MAIN GALLERY (10309-97 ST)

human understanding deftly and powerfully in her multi-component installation *Warm Snow*, poetically linking an evocative idea from science with the natural world of experience and an intimate personal landscape of loss and hope.

Entering *Warm Snow*, you hear her starting point: familiar pops and sputters, the audio blizzard of static. As she points out in her artist statement, television static—the stuff between the information we broadcast to each other—is an echo of the beginnings of the universe. It's primal information, part of the afterglow of cosmic background radiation from the Big Bang, a signature of origin that'll eventually dissipate and become undetectable. (Billions of years away, but TV static will mostly vanish next year as North American analog broadcasting technology is abandoned for digital.)

Within the cubic cocoon of the gallery, the source of the fuzzy audio is visible—a small television screen on a corner plinth generates a fog of static, mesmerizing black and white patterns dancing across the screen. A grid of 32 paper rectangles dominates a wall, each fossilizing a different dense static pattern on a sheet of homemade paper

in surprisingly delicate snowy hues of cream and dirty white. The eye is drawn to search for meaning, and the nature of Trask's homemade paper rewards, albeit incompletely: snatches of text can sometimes be picked out, part of the paper background rather than overlaying pattern.

Hugging the opposite corner, a series of smaller prints introduces a female figure and elaborates Trask's theme as the body interacts with text and language that has a static-like swarming of indistinct meaning. In one, the body is made of scrawled words (some literally "WORDS"), outstretched hands invisible beneath a halo of disjointed print. Another silhouette is empty, but collaged text bits envelop the head so densely it's raised off the paper. In the image series, words and cut-up text haunt the body or aura, shifting between the personal (handwritten) and received (text fragments)

On another plinth, a block of plaster entombs a child's face in relief, while another holds a looped video of the artist searching a bleak late winter landscape near a fog-shrouded airport.

There is an enigmatic ballet in *Warm Snow* between information and language, the infinite and the incomplete, meaning and gesture. The shiftings of memory and stutter of beginnings and endings that span ages hangs in the environment, disquieting but still—an idea of the eternal returned to us, somehow. **V**

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# Prairie Artsters studio visits 2008: Alex Janvier in Banff



As the metal doors begin to open within the visual arts studios above the Walter Phillips Gallery, there are only two studios already open and waiting. Balloons float from their scotch tape base on two metal doors adjacent to each other in the back corner by the common kitchen. The rooms are empty, with traces of thin brush strokes along a wooden table marked with the outlines of past canvases. Connecting each wall is a perpendicular line that in a blur could pass as ongoing lines of brightly coloured ribbons. But up close, the line breaks up into dozens of new smaller works by Cold Lake-based senior artist Alex Janvier.

Janvier has slowly and steadily become one of Canada's most well known

and respected working artists. Known for his sharp rhythmic strokes against a stark white background, at once acknowledging his landscape, his Dene and Saulteaux heritage and European training, Janvier was the subject of a much-lauded solo retrospective at the Art Gallery of Calgary in 2007 to coincide with his appointment to the Order of Canada.

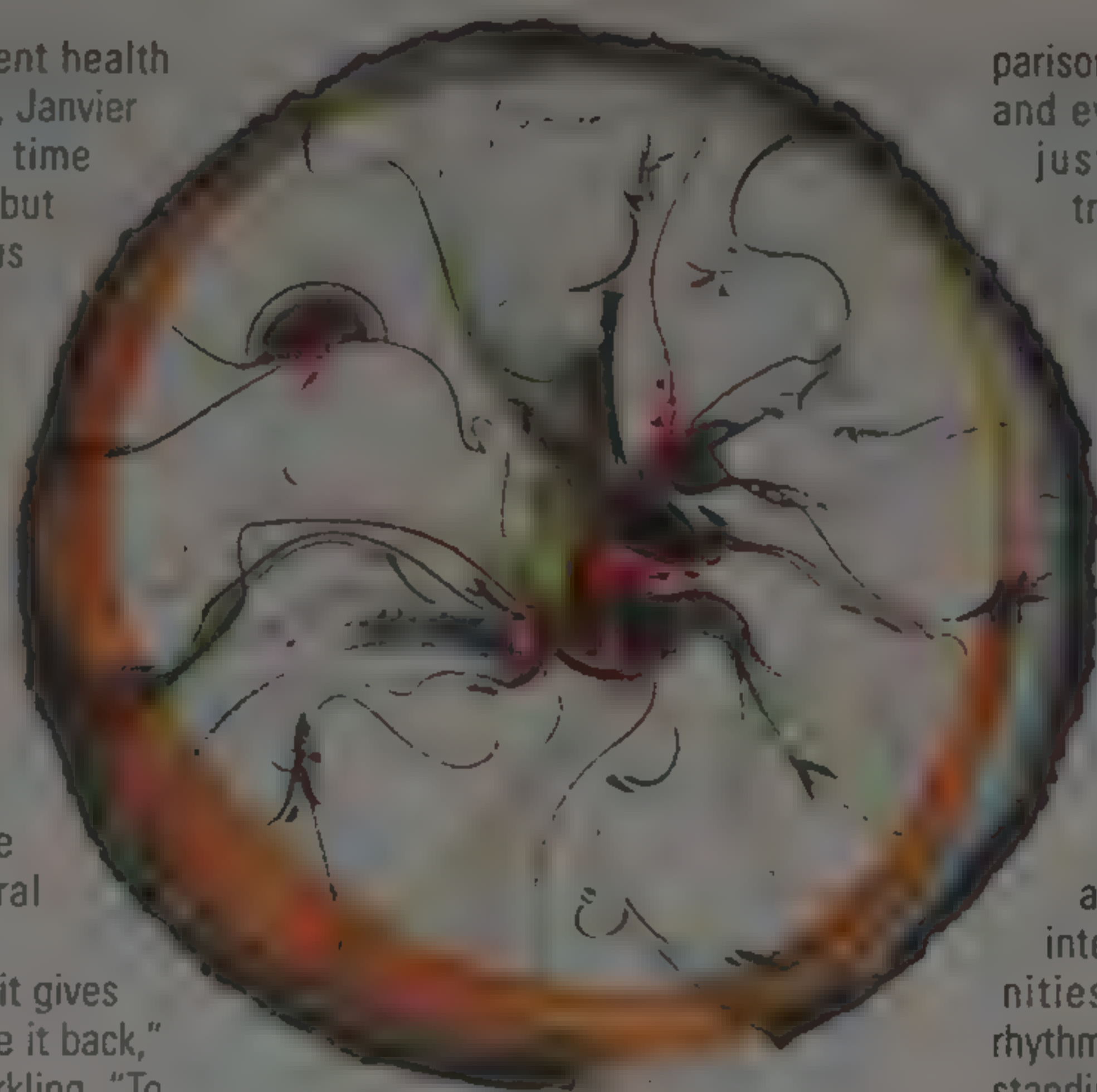
Attending ACAD from 1956 to 1960, Janvier had been raised in the highly contentious residential school system in Alberta. Taking part in the community of St Paul's art club, professional painter Carlo Altenburg took Janvier under his wing and encouraged him to go to art school.

"He must have seen something in me," Janvier muses nearly 60 years later, standing inside the larger of his two Banff studios. A recent, well-ruffled copy of the *Globe and Mail* lies strewn across the couch, and the open air room carries the distinct atmosphere of having been

heavily occupied. After a recent health issue that he does not get into, Janvier has returned to painting full time every day. Well into his 70s, but not slowing down, it's obvious that Janvier is still exploring the potentials and possibilities of his craft.

**FROM ALTENBURG**, who also taught at the University of Alberta, to his European-based instructors in ACAD, Janvier's techniques and aesthetics didn't begin to formulate until his third year of art school, when he reconnected with his ancestral culture.

"There's a rhythm in nature, it gives us so much and we have to give it back," Janvier says, his eyes still sparkling. "To the youth today, I tell them to get back to the culture."



parison to the granular texture of acrylic and even watercolours. Exploring not just his history, but a collective transcontinental history, Janvier's latest body of work also pushes his and others' theory that the Bering strait was once a traversed land bridge.

As a face of Canadian visual art to the international community, Janvier's recent turn to exploring transnational identity and aesthetics is just the latest path forged. Known within and outside of Canada as one of the country's leading contemporary Aboriginal artists, Janvier's appeal across intertribal and international communities is rooted in his awareness of rhythm as a concept for common understanding. From tuning into the rhythm of traditional dances and letting the movements of the legs sway his visual strokes, to the beat and syncopation of percussion alive in all cultural expressions, Janvier sees beyond boundaries and peers deep into his own inspiration.

"You're enlightened to look at your background, at your history. That's what becomes important." ▽

As part of his residency, he has begun painting in the shapes of traditional mandala drums, using an acid-free paper from St Armand, in Québec. Rhythm continues to be a reoccurring theme in his works decade after decade, a notion he doesn't find very surprising.

"You never stop learning. Nature is not occidental," he says.

Being officially selected to partake in a Canada/China cultural exchange in 1985 left an indelible impression on Janvier. Feeling a deeply rooted psychic connection to China, Janvier has started using Chinese calligraphy paper and ink, which he sums up as much finer in com-

Alex Janvier, Banff Fiction Residency  
Visited Feb 16, 2008

Amy Fung is the author of *Prairie Artsters.com*. Look for more studio visits throughout the summer of 2008 on *Prairie Artsters.com*.



## Three Viewings offers a room with a worldview



PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vviewweekly.com

**T**hree Viewings begins abruptly: there's no telling fade to black before the action rises. The music just continues to chirp along as Dave Clarke carries a vase of flowers onto the stage, giving a few curt introductory nods to the gathered audience as the house lights slowly dim.

An intriguing way to start—a nod to the play's direct, conversational format—but it almost backfires. The sudden introduction meant a few audience members forgot to turn off their phones, and after a brief and awkward ring, a couple of fumbling shut-down chimes could be heard. But that minor audience issue was easily worth the unusual intro, as *Three Viewings*' lack of a fourth wall is one of the reasons it's so compelling. The script is also tightly written, and it's channeled through three talented performers.

Broken up into a trio of monologues, the sections of *Three Viewings* are connected through a particular funeral home in Ohio. There's a number of callbacks throughout—characters mentioned in one monologue pop up in another, and Clarke physically changes the onstage flowers between each monologue—though each little snapshot of a life has a particular flavour of its own.

**OBSESSION IS UP FIRST** in "Tell-Tale," wherein funeral home employee Emil (Clarke) recounts his spiraling one-sided relationship with Tessie. Clarke fills out his role with puppy-eyed adoration: the object of his affection works in real estate, he tips her off about the freshly deceased (and thus, newly vacated houses), all the while slipping deeper into his self-gratifying obsession.

Davina Stewart follows with the show's crowning piece. "The Thief of Tears" is driven by Stewart's animated delivery as the too-cool-for-you Mac,

an occasional "corpse robber" who's back in town to retrieve a certain ring from her deceased grandmother. While Clarke wanders the stage with doe-eyed admiration, Stewart's dynamic recollections are the stuff of

PREVIEW

THU, MAR 13 - SUN, MAR 30 (8 PM)  
**THREE VIEWINGS**  
DIRECTED BY WAYNE PAQUETTE, JOHN HUDSON  
ORIGINATOR BY JEFFER HADJICHA  
STARRING DAVE CLARKE, DAVINA STEWART,  
EMILIA TELLEZ  
VANSCONA THEATRE (10329 - 83 AVE),  
\$16 - \$22

Sterlings: she re-enacts little moments with a coy confidence, strutting and even crumbling in sadness with a focused energy

Patricia Bell-Casey has the arduous task of delivering the finale piece after two bang-on performances, and curiously, co-director John Hudson (who guided this and Stewart's piece), has her performing it sitting down. Without continuing the energy that Clarke and Stewart's wandering spiels begat, some of the script's power gets sapped. But "Thirteen Things About Ed Carpolotti" is the furthest removed from the other pieces, and it provides a tender conclusion to the trilogy, as Bell-Casey's Virginia deals with the shady business her now deceased husband left behind.

Having no interactions or real onstage action is hardly a drawback here; the stories, each told to us directly, are individually sound. With each thread seamlessly woven into the collective whole, we get a portrait of more than just these three people: in *Three Viewings*, we get to see an entire interlocking world, and we get to see it thrice. **V**

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**ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA** Enterprise Square, 100, 10230 Jasper Ave (422-6223) • Open Mon-Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm (4-8pm free); Sat-Sun 11am-5pm • Drop-In Tours: Sat and Sun (12:30, 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30pm) • **SEEING THROUGH MODERNISM: EDMONTON 1970 - 1985** Until May 4 • **AWAKENING: THE ART OF IHUMAN.** exhibits works done by youth in the IHUMAN Youth Society program; until May 4 • **GENERATION:** Featuring contemporary North American artists whose work incorporates the images, ideals and anxieties of North American youth; until Mar. 24 • **SMALL:** Artistic responses to our sense of balance, proportion and scale; until Mar. 24 • **WINDOW DRESSING.** Shane Krepakevich focuses on the history and politics of department store window displays using the historic 102 St windows of the former Bay store; until Mar. 24 • Members free; \$10 (adult)/\$7 (senior/student); \$5 (6-12yrs)/free (5yrs and under)/\$20 (family-2 adults, 4 children)

**BOHEMIA CYBER CAFÉ** 11012 Jasper Ave • **ART AND MUSAK** Monthly Arty Party featuring local metal sculptures • Thu, Mar. 20 (9pm)

**CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA** 9103-95 Ave (461-3427) • Mon-Fri 10am-6pm; Sat 10am-5pm • **MELI-MELO.** Artworks by Elaine Berglund, Paul Labrie, Gilberte Gagné, Maria Cieszewska and guest Milos Hajek • Until Apr. 2

**CHRISTL BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY** 9621 Whyte Ave (498-1984) • Open Mon-Fri 11am-5pm • Closed over Christmas • **MOTHER AND CHILD.** Paintings by Christl Bergstrom

**EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY** Enterprise Square, 10230 Jasper Ave (780-492-9128) • Open: 7 days a week 7am-11pm • **RESURRECTED.** Artworks by Leona Olaisen • Mar. 22-Apr. 9 • Opening reception: Thu, Mar. 27 (6-8pm)

**THE ARTS BUILDING GALLERY** 112 St, 89 Ave (492-2081) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 2-5pm • **THIS WILD SPIRIT, WOMEN IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF CANADA.** A sampling of women's creative responses—in fiction and travel writing, photographs and paintings, embroidery and beadwork, letters and diaries, poetry and posters—to their experiences in the Rocky Mountains of Canada, until Mar. 22 • **HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT:** Paintings by Gillian Willans; until Mar. 22

**FRINGE GALLERY** Paint Spot basement, 10618 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • **ELEUSIS.** Artworks by George Botchert Margaret Braun, E. Ross Bradley, Vern Busby, Edmund Haakonson, Eileen Heidler, Keith Turnbull, and Raymond Theriault • Until Mar. 29

**FRONT GALLERY** 12312 Jasper Ave (488-2952) • **DOWN THE LANE** Paintings by Kari Duke and Tony Baker

**GALLERY AT PHILIPPS-STANLEY A. HUNTER LIBRARY** Main Fl, Sir Winston Churchill Sq (496-7030) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-9pm; Sat 9am-6pm; Sun 1-5pm • **INSIDE OUT:** Works by the Edmonton Sculptors' Association • Until Mar. 30

**HARCOURT HOUSE** 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • **Main Gallery:** **BUSINESS AS USUAL:** A re-imagined arctic landscape by installation artist and sculptor Lynn Richardson • **Front Room gallery: UNPACKED.** Installation by Jennifer Pickering • Until Apr. 5

**JEFF ALLEN GALLERY** Strathcona Place Senior Centre, 10831 Jasper Ave (433-5807) • Open Mon-Fri 11:30am-1pm • **MEADOWLARK PAINTERS.** Featuring artworks by Louise Rau, Ruth Harris, Esther Koziol and Dorothy Mitchell • Until Mar. 27

**JOHNSON GALLERY** 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm • Pen and ink works and large abstract by Joan P. Noury Barry, oil paintings by Al Roberge and Don Sharpe. Artworks by Myles MacDonald Prints by Toti. Photos by Bob McGouey and pottery by Noboru Kubo • Through March

**LATITUDE 53** 10248-106 St (423-5353) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-6pm; Sat noon-5pm • **ANTECEDENTS.** Artworks by Stephan Weber; until Mar. 22 • **STORIES FROM THE INNER CITY:** Artworks by C.W. Carson; until Mar. 22 • Closed for Easter, Mar. 21-24

**THE LOFT GALLERY** A.J. Ottewill Arts Centre, 590 Broadmoor Blvd, Sherwood Park (449-4443) • Open Thu 5-9pm; Sat 10am-4pm • **ABSTRACTS:** Artworks by the members of the Art Society of Strathcona County • Until Mar. 31

**MANDOLIN BOOKS** 6419-112 Ave (479-4050) • **THERE IS A TRICK I CAN DO WITH MIRRORS** Photographs by Anthony Easton • Until Mar. 30

**McMULLEN GALLERY** U of A Hospital, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm, Sat-Sun 1-8pm • **EIGHT SOLOS-FUSED BY SILVER** Black and white photography by the Monochrome Guild • Until Apr. 13

**MCPAG** 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-4pm; Sun 10am-6:30pm • **FOLLOW MY FOOT-STEPS.** Recent paintings by George Kubac; Mar. 27-Apr. 22, opening reception, Sun, Mar. 30 (1-3:30pm) • **Dining Room Gallery:** Photography by Jenny Delaney; until Mar. 20

**MUSÉE HÉRITAGE MUSEUM** 5 Ste Anne St, St. Albert (459-1528) • **PORTRAITS OF THE NORTH:** Pencil drawings by Gerald Kuehl and bead and needlework from Aboriginal communities • Until Apr. 13

**OUT OF THE FIRE STUDIO** 12214 Jasper Ave (378-0240) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm, Sun 12-4 pm • **POT-HEADS:** Sculpted clay post by Cindy Clarke • Opening Mar. 29 (1-4pm)

**PETER ROBERTSON GALLERY** 10183-112 St (452-0286) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm • Group show, including new works by James Lahey and Jonathan Forrest

**PETER ROBERTSON GALLERY 2** 12304 Jasper Ave (455-7479) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm • Group show, artworks by Gregory Hardy, Robert Wiseman, and Frances Thomas

**PORTAL ART GALLERY** 9414-91 St (702-7522) • Open Tue-Fri 12-8pm; Sat 12-7pm, by appointment • **MIXED MUSINGS:** Artworks by Cheryl Muth • Until Apr. 17

**PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY** 19 Perron St, St. Albert (460-4310) • Open Tue-Sat (10am-5pm), Thu (10am-8pm) • **LAND POEMS.** Featuring artworks by Sharon Malayko, Lyndal Osborne, Lorraine Shulba, and Garry Williams • Apr. 3-26 • Opening reception: Thu, Apr. 3 (7-9pm) • Drop-in Art for the Artist at Heart: Mar. 20

**ROWLES AND COMPANY** 10130-103 St, Mezz (426-4035) • **URBANSCAPES:** Paintings by Pauline Ulliac. Featuring paintings and sculptures by various artists

**ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM** 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open daily 9-5pm • **Orientation Gallery: MUSEUM BY NUMBERS.** Photos and facts documenting some of the Museum's history • **40 FABULOUS FINDS:** Stories about how certain objects have been acquired and how some of the museum's spaces were constructed • **STORIES FROM THE SOUTHEAST COLLECTION:** Ongoing • **On the Grounds:** Architectural, sculptural and natural pieces of art. The On the Grounds guide • **Government House:** Public tours Sat and Sun and statutory holidays (11am-4:30pm); phone 427-2281 information • **Wild Alberta:** Ongoing gallery • **Synchrude Gallery of Aboriginal Culture:** Stories of First Peoples' history in western Canada; ongoing gallery • **Natural History Gallery:** the Bug Room, Treasures of the Earth, Fossils, Creatures from the Depths of Time and the Bird Gallery; ongoing gallery • Self-Guided Tours • Art about the Museum guide

**SCOTT GALLERY** 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • **DUST OF DAYS:** Artworks by Robert Sinclair • Until Apr. 1

**SNAP GALLERY** 10309-97 St (423-1432) • Open Tue-Sat 12-5pm • **WARM SNOW:** Paintworks by Karen Trask; until Apr. 12 • **SNAP'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER PRINT EXHIBITION** EPI 2008 fundraiser; until Apr. 12

**SPRUCE GROVE ART GALLERY** 35-5 Ave, Spruce Grove (962-0664) • **THE MIDAS TOUCH:** Artworks by Julie Kaldenhoven • Until Mar. 29

**THE STUDIO GALLERY** 11 Perron St (460-5993) • Open Thu 12-8pm, Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-5pm • **MY CANADA:** Oil landscape paintings by Al Anderson • Until Mar. 29

**STUDIO GALLERY** 143 Grandin Park Plaza, St. Albert (460-5990) • Open: Wed-Fri 10am-6pm; Thu 12-8pm; Sat 10am-5pm • **NOUVEAU ARTISTE:** Paintings by Miles Constable, until Apr. 26

**TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE** 11211-142 St (452-9100) • Purdy's Easter Egg Hunt; activity: Sat, Mar. 22 (noon-4pm) • **Easter Eggs travaganza:** Activity: Mar. 22-24 (noon-4pm) • **MUMMIES: SECRETS OF THE PHARAOHS:** IMAX film • **Margaret Zeidler Star Theatre:** Daily

**TU GALLERY** 10718-124 St (452-9664) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm; Thu 10am-8pm • **CREATURE COMFORT:** Animal sculptural furniture by Jamie Russell • Until Mar. 29

**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA** Human Ecology Bldg Foyer, 89 Ave, 116 St • **CELEBRITY** (constructing identity, creating community and expressing worship through everyday possessions): Exhibit using ordinary objects, put together by the students of Human Ecology 462 • Opening reception Mar. 25 (4-6pm) • Mar. 25-May 5

**VAAA GALLERY** 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • Mon-Fri 10am-4pm; Sat 12-4pm • **UP CLOSE:** Artworks by Niki Standing and Robert Todrick • Until Apr. 5

**WEST END GALLERY** 12308 Jasper Ave (488-4892) • Landscape paintings by Brent Laycock; until Mar. 27

## LITERARY

**BLUE CHAIR CAFÉ** 8624-76 Ave (469-8755) • Story Slam: An opportunity for writers to share their work, explore their talents and show off • 3rd Wed every month • \$5 (donation)

**CITY ARTS CENTRE** 10943-84 Ave (437-9555) • **T.A.L.E.S.**—The Alberta League Encouraging Storytelling • Monthly Storytelling Circle. Everyone welcome to tell stories or to come and listen; 2nd Fri each month through to June 2008 (8pm), \$3 admission, first time free

**HULBERT'S** 7601-115 St • The Olive Reading Series Poetry, politics and discussion; an open mic to follow for new poets • 2nd Tue each month (7pm) • Free

**KASBAR LOUNGE** Gianni's Taverna, 10444 Whyte Ave, www.ravingpoets.com • Heart Beat: a new series of open-stage poetry and improv music with the Raving Poets band • Every Wed until May 28 (7:30pm sign-up/8pm show)

**ROSIE'S BAR AND GRILL** 10475-80 Ave (932-4409) • **T.A.L.E.S.**—The Alberta League Encouraging Storytelling • Story Café: open mic opportunity • 1st Thu every month, 7-9pm; \$5

**STEEPS TEA LOUNGE** Collage Plaza, 11116-82 Ave • Spoken word open mic • Last Wed every month

**3 BANANAS CAFÉ** Sir Winston Churchill Sq (428-2200) • **WOW-Wired on Words.** A creative writing process for amateurs and professionals • Every Sun (11am-1:15pm), info e-mail bewell.2008@gmail.com • \$10 (donation)

**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA** Rm 122, Education South Building 87 Ave, 112 St • Canadian Authors Association • CAA general meeting. *A Career in Poetry* with Alice Major, Fri, Mar. 28 (8pm); Writers' Circle (7pm, precedes every meeting); first time guests and members free, returning guests \$10 • *What Makes a Poem Work?* with Alice Major, Sat, Mar. 29 (9:30am-4pm), \$30 (member)/\$60 (non-member) • Pre-register, Joe 423-5477

**UPPER CRUST CAFÉ** 10909-86 Ave (422-8174) • The Poets' Haven: Monday Night weekly reading series presented by Stroll of Poets, every Mon night (7pm); \$5 (door)

## LIVE COMEDY

**THE COMEDY FACTORY** 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Thu (8:30pm), \$11, Fri (8:30pm), \$20; Sat (8pm and 10:30pm), \$20 • Every Wed (8:30pm); Wacky

Wednesday: \$5 • Kris Shaw; Mar. 20-22

**THE COMIC STRIP** 1646 Bourbon St, WEM, 8882-170 St (483-5999) • Open nightly 8pm, Fri 8pm and 10:30pm, Sat 8pm and 10:30pm, Sun 8pm • Hit or Miss Mondays • Todd Sawyer, Tyler Hawkins, and Lara Callicou: until Mar. 23 • 4th Annual search for Edmonton's Funniest Person with a Day Job, hosted by Paul Brown, Tuesdays until Apr. 8

**THE LAUGH SHOP (YUK YUK'S)** Londonderry Mall, 6606-137 Ave, www.thelaughshop.ca (481-9857) • Open Wed-Thu 8pm, Fri-Sat 8pm and 10:30pm • Tuesday Amateur Night followed by professional headliner • Wednesday Comedy Challenge followed by professional headliner • Brian Lazanik, Andrew Iwanyk and Harold Pruess; Mar. 20-22

## THEATRE

**CAUGHT!** PCL Studio, TransAlta Barns, 10330-84 Ave • Theatre of Invention and Isis Productions • Written and performed by Melissa Thingelstad, directed by Kathleen Weiss. Sarah suffers from a suspension of belief. As she retreats inside herself to find answers, strands of her life begin to resonate in a new way • Mar. 28-Apr. 5 (Tue-Sun 8pm, Sat matinees 2pm) • \$18 (adult)/\$15 (students/senior) at TiX on the Square, 420-1757, door

**CHIMPROVI** Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (449-0695) • Long-form improvisational sketches performed by Rapid Fire Theatre's top improvisers • Every Sat (11pm) except last Sat of each month until July 24

**THE DECEMBER MAN (L'HOMME DE DÉCEMBRE)** Citadel Rice Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • By Colleen Murphy, directed by Micheline Chevrier, starring Nicola Lipman and Brian Dooley. When Marc Lépine opened fire in the classroom at École Polytechnique in 1989, Kathleen and Benoît's son was among the men ordered out of the room. At first the parents feel lucky that he was spared, but Jean's young life comes utterly unglued. His only thoughts are of what he could and should have done. For mature audiences, content and language may not be suitable for all patrons • Until Mar. 23

**DIE-NASTY** Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (433-3399) • Improv soap opera every Mon (8pm)

**THE DROWNING GIRLS** Catalyst Theatre, 8529 Gateway Boulevard • By Daniele Viaskalic, Beth Graham and Charlie Tomlinson, presented by Bent Out of Shape Productions. Three brides and a bathtub. Who are they? Why are they there? As they dive into the water the women discover the truth of how their fates intertwine in this story of love and betrayal • Until Mar. 23 (Tue-Sat 8pm; Sat-Sun 2pm) • \$18 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior) at TiX on the Square, door

**FRAZIER-THE COLLEGE YEARS** Jubilations Dinner Theatre, 8882-170 St (484-2424) • Join us as we seek to answer some questions about Frazier Crane, mixed to your favourite '60s Motown/R&B music • Until Apr. 6

**HALF LIFE** Citadel Shooter Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • By John Mighton, directed by Daniel Brooks. Clara and Patrick meet and fall in love in a nursing home. Or are they rekindling a passionate memory from the 1940s? She has Alzheimer's. He is guarded about his past as a military code-breaker. Clara's son and Patrick's daughter have differing opinions about their parents' emotionally-charged and physical relationship • Until Mar. 30

**THE KITCHEN WITCHES** Mayfield Dinner Theatre 16615-109 Ave (483-4051) • By Caroline Smith • Isabel Lomax and Dolly Biddle are two "mature" TV cooking show hostesses who have hated each other for 30 years then circumstances put them together on a TV show called "The Kitchen Witches" • Until Apr. 13 • Buffet and show: \$49-\$79

**LANGUAGE AND CONTENT** Jekyll and Hyde Pub, 10610-100 Ave (297-3675) • Image Theatre's monthly reading series. This month's readings include Trina Davies *West of the 3rd Meridian*; Melissa Major's solo piece *Unicorn Horns*; an adaptation of Roald Dahl's *The Swan* and an instalment of *My Crazy Roommate*. Also featured is Kurt Spennrath's new play *The Trillionaires* • Last Mon every month (7pm door, 8pm show) • Pay-what-you-can (suggested donation \$5)

**THE LONESOME WEST** Roxy Theatre, 10708-124 St • Atlas Theatre Co-op (with Theatre Network) • Dark come dy about two Irish brothers who battle over the rights to their late father's inheritance • Until Mar. 23, Tue-Sat (8pm), Sun (2pm) • \$20 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior) at TiX on the Square

**MY NAME IS RACHEL CORRIE** Catalyst Theatre, 8529 Gateway Blvd (434-9236) • Theatre Yes • A chronicle of the life and controversial death of the American peace activist crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer in Gaza • Mar. 28-Apr. 12 • \$21 (adult)/\$16 (low income) at TiX on the Square; Tue Pay-What-You-Can (door)

**PRETTY IN PINK** Ardene Theatre, 5 St. Anne St, St. Albert • St. Albert Catholic High School's production based on the popular '80s film • Mar. 26 (7pm); Mar. 27 (12pm, 7pm) • \$15 (adult)/\$10 (student/senior)/\$5 (12pm show) at St. Albert High 459-7781

**ROMEO AND JULIET** King's University College, 9125-50 St (465-3500) • Director Heather Fitzsimmons Frey and assistant director Alana Stord recreates the love story into a modern day tale between environmentalists and logging business executives • Mar. 26-29 (8pm) • \$3 (student)/\$10 (adult)

**SWALLOW** Azimuth Theatre, 11315-106 Ave • Frente Production presents an icy comedy for a melting globe by Leslee Kroll directed by Eileen Sproule, and starring Rebecca Starr and Laura Raboud • Mar. 26-30 (8pm), Mar. 29 (2pm) • \$15 (PWYC for underemployed) at TiX on the Square, 420-1757

**THEATRESPORTS** Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (449-0695) • Presented by Rapid Fire Theatre • Teams of improvisers create sketches on the spot based on audience suggestions, and have the results evaluated by a team of heartless judges • Every Fri (11pm) • Tickets available by phone

**THREE VIEWINGS** Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave • Shadow Theatre, by Jeffrey Hatcher, starring Patricia Bell Casey, Dave Clarke, and Dávina Stewart. In a funeral parlour, three stones interweave to portray the deceased, the bereaved and those left behind as they go to extraordinary lengths to hold on to memories, money, life and love • Until Mar. 30, Tue-Sat (8pm) Sat-Sun (2pm) • Weeknights and Sun matinees: \$19 (adult)/\$16 (student/senior), weekends \$22 (adult)/\$19 (student/senior) at TiX on the Square

**TWELFTH NIGHT** Timms Centre for the Arts, 112 St, 87 Ave • Studio Theatre • By Shakespeare, directed by Eda Holmes • A comedy involving mistaken identity, gender bending disguises and the madness of love • Mar. 26-Apr. 5 • Preview: Mar. 26 (8pm), \$5; Opening night, Mar. 27 \$20 (adult)/\$15 (senior)/\$10 (student); Mon-Thu: \$16 (adult)/\$12 (senior)/\$10 (student); Fri-Sat: \$19 (adult)/\$13 (senior)/\$10 (student); Matinees, Apr. 3 (12:30pm): \$12 (adult)/\$11 (senior)/\$10 (student) at TiX on the Square

**VAGINA MONOLOGUES** Myer Horowitz Theatre, Students' Union Building, U of A • By Eve Ensler • Benefit performance • Mar. 25 (7pm silent art auction follows) • Tickets \$10 • 426-2893

## Megatunes

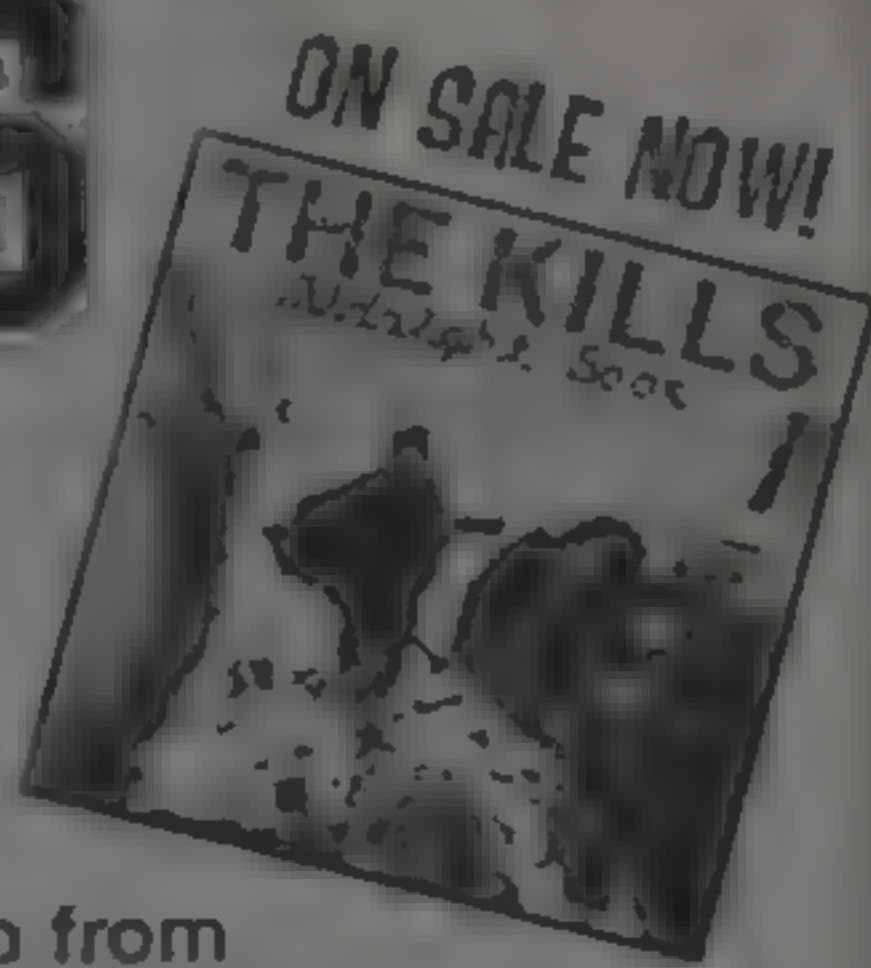
Your Music Destination

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 20, 2008

1. Black Mountain - In The Future (scratch records)
2. KD Lang - Watershed (nonesuch)
3. Vampire Weekend - S/T (xl)
4. Radiohead - In Rainbows (tbd records)
5. Robert Plant & Alison Krauss - Raising Sound (rounder)
6. Iron & Wine - The Shepherds Dog (sub pop)
7. Kathleen Edwards - Asking For Flowers (maple)
8. Levon Helm - Dirt Farmer (vanguard)
9. Daniel Lanois - Here Is What Is (red floor)
10. Matt Costa - Unfamiliar Faces (brushfire)
11. Corb Lund - Horse Soldier! Horse Soldier! (stony plain)
12. Drive By Truckers - Brighter Than Creation's Dark (new west)
13. Nada Surf - Lucky (barsuk)
14. O.S.T. - Juno (rhino)
15. Cadence Weapon - After Party Babies (upper class)
16. Jim White - Transnormal Skiperoo (luks bop)
17. Sam Baker - Pretty World (sam baker)
18. Hayden - In Field & Town (hardwood)
19. Exit Strategy - United States Of Amnesia (es systems)
20. Samantha Schultz - Both Sides (samantha schultz)
21. Gary Louris - Vagabonds (ryko)
22. O.S.T. - I'm Not There (columbia)
23. Hawksley Workman - Between The Beautifuls (universal)
24. The Sadies - New Seasons (outside)
25. The Loved Ones - Build And Burn (fat)
26. The Dirtbombs - We Have You Surrounded (in the red)
27. Genghis Tron - Board Up The House (relapse)
28. Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez - Live From The Ruhr Triennale (trainwreck)
29. Jose Gonzalez - In Our Nature (impend)
30. Ray Bonneville - Gori' By Feel (red house)

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# Slow boat through China: Chang takes us *Up the Yangtze*



JONATHAN BUSCH / [jonathan@vueweekly.com](mailto:jonathan@vueweekly.com)  
Despite the obvious changes over the past 10 years to both publicly funded Canadian film and television and the feature-length documentary, there is a particular amount of resistance shown in the efforts of certain filmmakers to investing in generic stylistic conventions that have consistently proven to draw

crowds and dollars. In particular, I'm thinking of the most recent season of the CBC's hit-and-miss programming of sitcoms and one-hour dramas as it historically coincides with the culmination of the high-impact popcorn documentary. They're mere signs of the conscious adjustments of the arts by bureaucratic forces to meet eye-to-eye with the supply-and-demand of

DOCS  
OPENS FRI, MAR 21  
**UP THE YANGTZE**  
DIRECTED BY JON CHANG  
★★★

the Western consumer, so that both parties may benefit from the exchange.

It's a complicated world we live and make art in.

Yang Chung's *Up the Yangtze*, a non-fiction account of the effects of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam on the inhabitants along China's central river basin, falls on countless ends of the issue. It's expressive, informative and arguably comprehensive, therefore also convenient somehow to many of the parties involved in shaping the Canadian cultural and creative identity. Since its release in late 2007, it's kicked royal festival ass in Vancouver and Toronto, not to mention its official selection at Sundance where, rumour has it, even Quentin Tarantino was turned away at the packed screening.

For starters, the narrative of *Up the Yangtze* involves a dramatic plot that is quite sensitive to issues of family, class, and cross-culture barriers. That hits home for a lot of people, especially if they saw *Babel* or attend a post-secondary school. Its central subjects are two young teenagers from different economic backgrounds who get jobs on the infamous "farewell cruise," an alluring journey along the Yangtze river that boasts the opportunity to witness its sublime power before it is flooded and lost forever.

CINDY YU SHUI, a shy though bright 16-year-old, is sent, almost unwillingly, by her family who share a hut in a field beside the river. Her desire is to attend high school, though her parents feel her youth and middle school education should be put to use in a job on the cruise to help provide a better income, as the flooding has forced them to relocate from their home. Meanwhile, Jerry Chen Bo Yu, an only child of an urban family, lands a prestigious job on the cruise smiling and crooning for old white couples on vacation. The two stories, one rooted in the necessity to combat poverty and the other in a country taking advantage of its own people to benefit a tourist attraction, are weaved into the film's literal trot down the river that also include glimpses of the devastated communities and the misadventures of the polite but ignorant Westerners aboard the cruise.

It provides what documentaries from the National Film Board are known for—character-driven non-fiction plots that balance both the private real life melodrama and the articulation of something more glob-

ally meaningful. At the same time, their films skilfully avoid the incessant pull at the heart strings that characterize so many theatrical-release documentaries, where the emotional exhaustion often leads to the suspicion that these feelings are far too convenient to their cause for it to be "real." This is especially true of the NFB's past two Genie-winning documentaries, Jennifer Baichwal's *Manufactured Landscapes* and Gary Burns' *Radiant City*—both abstract and contradict the issues they draw attention to, a courageous effort amidst an age that seeks quick decisions about the information it consumes.

*Up the Yangtze* is caught somewhere in the middle. Honing some beautiful observations of the river and its inhabitants, its effect is at times impeded by an excessive personal commentary. The film opens with a rather unconventional and absorbing quote from Confucius, leading into the first of many stunning sequences of visuals that portray the relationship of the dam to the river. It's worth more than one viewing to share the

space of affect that Chang creates. There are, however, a number of misguided decisions to insert Chang's verbal observations of the river and its site of tourism, which work against the meditative thoughtfulness and intensity of the imagery. It has the potential to evoke hostilities that complicate one's initial viewing, instead of allowing the chaotic and difficult events to underhandedly chart their course.

The film succeeds where it is the most staggeringly simple, from Cindy's departure from her family to a fascinating turn of events that upsets Jerry's confidence as a young person in China. They are told with a great deal of sincerity, and framed by a passionate view of the Yangtze that suggests the integrity of Chang's vision. That's why a hyper-aesthetic image, half-way through the film, of a young Chinese girl dancing against a background of pink lights with Chang sharing in another voice-over his frustration over what we've already seen is distracting, and maybe even a little pretentious. ▽

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# Ang Lee's Ice Storm is a different kind of disaster movie

**FLICKS** | **DVDETECTIVE**  
JOSEF BRAUN & BRIAN GIBSON  
dvdetective@vueweekly.com

Early in the commentary track he shares with writer/producer James Schamus featured on Criterion's new two-disc special edition, director Ang Lee describes *The Ice Storm* (1997) as a "disaster film." While it might seem laughable to apply this genre to a movie concerned with upper-middle class domestic conflict in 1973 suburban Connecticut, it proves an inspired way of contextualizing the movie's cycle of events. Based on Rick Moody's novel, *The Ice Storm* does in fact contain a pair of disasters, the larger being the Watergate scandal, the more immediate being the weather event of the title. Neither disaster promises pyrotechnics or rampant death, yet both have some sort of transformative effect on the characters. This effect works best when

functioning on the level of atmosphere, but there's also a tangible, irreversible effect that ultimately drapes an overwhelming shadow over the entire story.

It's about two families. Ben and Elena Hood (Kevin Kline and Joan Allen) struggle amiably through marital disharmony, placating themselves with a casual affair and kleptomania respectively. Their teenage children Paul and Wendy (Tobey Maguire and Christina Ricci) use the freedom granted to them by their desperate-to-be-hip parents to explore pharmaceuticals and sex with a precocious inquiry. Jim and Janey Carver (Jamey Sheridan and Sigourney Weaver), by comparison, seem more mutually remote and programmatic in their mid-life crises. Their sons Mikey and Sandy (Elijah Wood and Adam Hann-Byrd), are the willing playmates of the pro-active Wendy, who engages each in separate games of show-me-yours-and-I'll-show-you-mine. Building tensions up toward the night of the storm, where the parents

abandon the kids to attend a key party drenched in polyester pathos, the story operates around this generational role reversal: what happens when the parents act like kids and vice versa.

**IN THE SAME SENSE** that *Brokeback Mountain* (2005)—Lee's other most fundamentally American film—can be regarded as being about the failure of love to overcome outspoken social antipathies toward homosexuality, *The Ice Storm* can be said to be about the failure of The Sexual Revolution to overcome the repressive apparatus of the American family/community. This sense of failure emerges through a series of interesting conditions: virtually every character is either too old or too young to have come of age during the radical cultural shifts of the late 1960s; the characters exist largely within a community cut off from the unruly influence of cosmopolitan life by geography and affluence; and, crucially, the film climaxes with a fatal tragedy

that reverberates hugely through the final sequence, feeling unavoidably like some cosmic punishment for half-hearted experiments in permissive parenting. This ending still feels to me like this terrifically rich film's one major misfire, reducing the complex relationships by way of what feels like the act of a forsaken and vengeful God.

Of course it would be even more reductive to judge *The Ice Storm* solely on such a reading of its last reel. Inherent in the film's unusual multitude of central characters, with their ongoing, measured transgressions, their flashes of fleeting insight and their general lack of decisiveness, is the idea of the movie as a multifaceted portrait rather than a traditional linear narrative anchored by some overt moral lesson or resolution. Lee himself felt attracted to what he calls a Cubist method of directing, wanting to show varying sides of a situation, an idea or an emotion all at once.

A lot of attention was paid to Weaver when the film came out. Her subtle balance-

ing of Janey's exterior frigidity with an inner vulnerability is genuinely impressive, but her character remains marginal. Allen's character by contrast feels more central and certainly more desperate, yet Elena nonetheless feels too sketched out. Kline, who Moody himself credits with deepening the character of Ben, stands out from all the other adults because his weaknesses are so acute, his humiliation so squirm-inducing, and his deficiencies so tenderly undercut by the actor's ingratiating persona. But the fact is *The Ice Storm* belongs to the kids: moony-eyed Wood conveys such innocent rapture; Maguire's wavering voice and goofily cavalier way with literary references imbues his every attempt at confident delivery with a near-palpable ache; Hann-Byrd's unbreakable astonishment with everything around him is both heart-breaking and totally hilarious; and Ricci, more than anyone, embodies the film's tender hesitancy and desire for some elusive self-realization and sensual fulfillment. She's amazing. ♥

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## McDonald can't put Tracey back together

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vancouverweekly.com

Mainstream films have done surprisingly little with the cinematic form. Dissolves, fades, washes, time lags and split screens are rarely used, certainly not obviously. There was Mike Figgis's screen-quarantining *Timecode* experiment, and the Brit police procedural *Trial and Retribution* uses multiple frames, but cases are few and far between.

Veteran Canadian director Bruce McDonald's *The Tracey Fragments* can hardly be called a mainstream film, though that's largely because of its form—the one image we're used to seeing on screen is sliced and diced, then laid out all over the cinematic cutting-board.

Sometimes the effect is confusing—a parade of small images will pop up at the top or bottom of the screen—or better suited to a video art exhibit. When Tracey (Ellen Page) thinks she sees her missing brother in a coffee shop, strips of images are unnecessary—she's whirling around but fixated on looking for him, and the shot should be absolutely single-minded, too.

Elsewhere, the form doesn't overwhelm content but enhances the story's emotion, as when Tracey hits the side of a telephone booth over and over in frustration. With each slam of her body against the glass, a small shot of her mother, who's hung up at the other end of the line, drums into view. Aural and visual mix here to pound out this connection that's slipping away. There's an outstanding dreamy-sex-then-back-to-brutal-reality scene, too, and a moment when a murder of crows flit through Tracey's black- and blood-stained mind.

**TRACEY FEELS FRACTURED**—she may have a split personality disorder, or be another teenager who feels torn, or both—and her sense of reality, of truth, is ragged and kaleidoscopic. She talks about pieces—pieces of people and things becoming part of somebody; sex is a way of taking

CANADIAN

FRI, MAR 21, SUN, MAR 23 (9:15 PM)  
SAT, MAR 22, MON, MAR 24 (7 PM)  
**THE TRACEY FRAGMENTS**  
DIRECTED BY BRUCE McDONALD  
WRITTEN BY MAURICE MEDVED  
STARRING ELLEN PAGE, ARI COHEN, SLIM TWIG  
METRO CINEMA, \$10  
★★★

someone in, absorbing an essence—and her memories split off in different directions. The restless, near-randomness of teenage life, when the pieces don't quite fit, jigs and jags along.

The short bursts of dialogue aren't always sharp, though. Tracey's expressions are as often diary-style earnest as naively profound. (Exhibit A—"He stuck his cock in me and said I love you" vs "it feels like someone cut you open with a jagged piece of glass." Exhibit B—A down-and-out guy talks like an academic dramaturge: "I'd like to interject here ...")

Page fires along, but she's overcome by the shards of shots. McDonald (*Highway 61*, *Hard Core Logo*) adds a scruffy, punk look—Tracey's crush, Billy Zero (played by the even-better-sounding Slim Twig) is a Dean meets Dylan rebel out of a '70s flick—but the film can fall into an action-strip sense of squalor, scuzzy crudeness that pops out and beats Tracey back down (usually when she or someone else is half-naked).

One of Canada's Top Ten for 2007, *The Tracey Fragments* boasts a cross-country pedigree: background footage of Winnipeg, on-location shooting in Hamilton, adapted from her novel by a Vancouver-based writer.

The film's fragmentary form shatters a strong sense of place, adding to Tracey's sense of alienation and being lost in a vague cityscape of sameness but subtracting a necessary layer of reality, giving less to hold onto in a film that can be hard to focus on. There are some overlapping themes and motifs—belts, whiteness and an approaching blizzard—and dark obsessions that have been cut loose from their Christian origins (transubstantiation, sex

associated with a loss of innocence).

But the basic power of the plot's rewound revelation isn't there, shrapneled by the form. The bits and pieces of imagery work better when we're contemplating a still scene—squares of sunlight on a floor as Tracey plays a board game, or Tracey making faces in a photo booth. Motion tends to be muddled: reruns and slo-mos of Tracey running, or a shot that's just reframed differently, not actually focussed on other details, distract and detract. More limited fields of vision, rather than a panoptic, fly's eye-view of the world, would be more powerful.

The film's unrelenting collage of images cuts both ways, then, but *The Tracey Fragments* is more admirable than enjoyable. Some films reward multiple viewings, but this film, offering multiple views, falls short of being memorably singular. ▽

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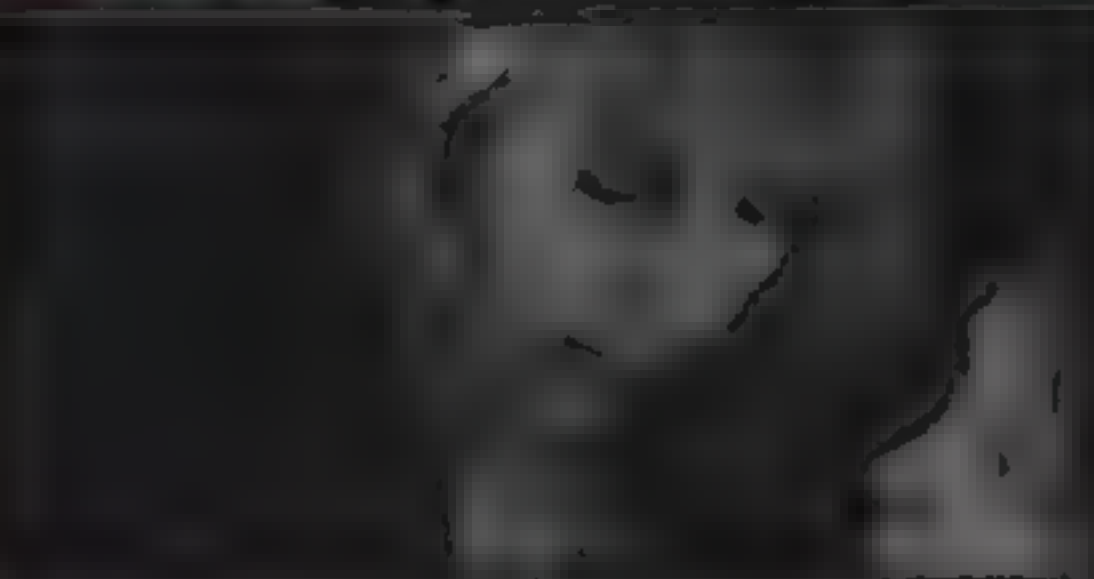
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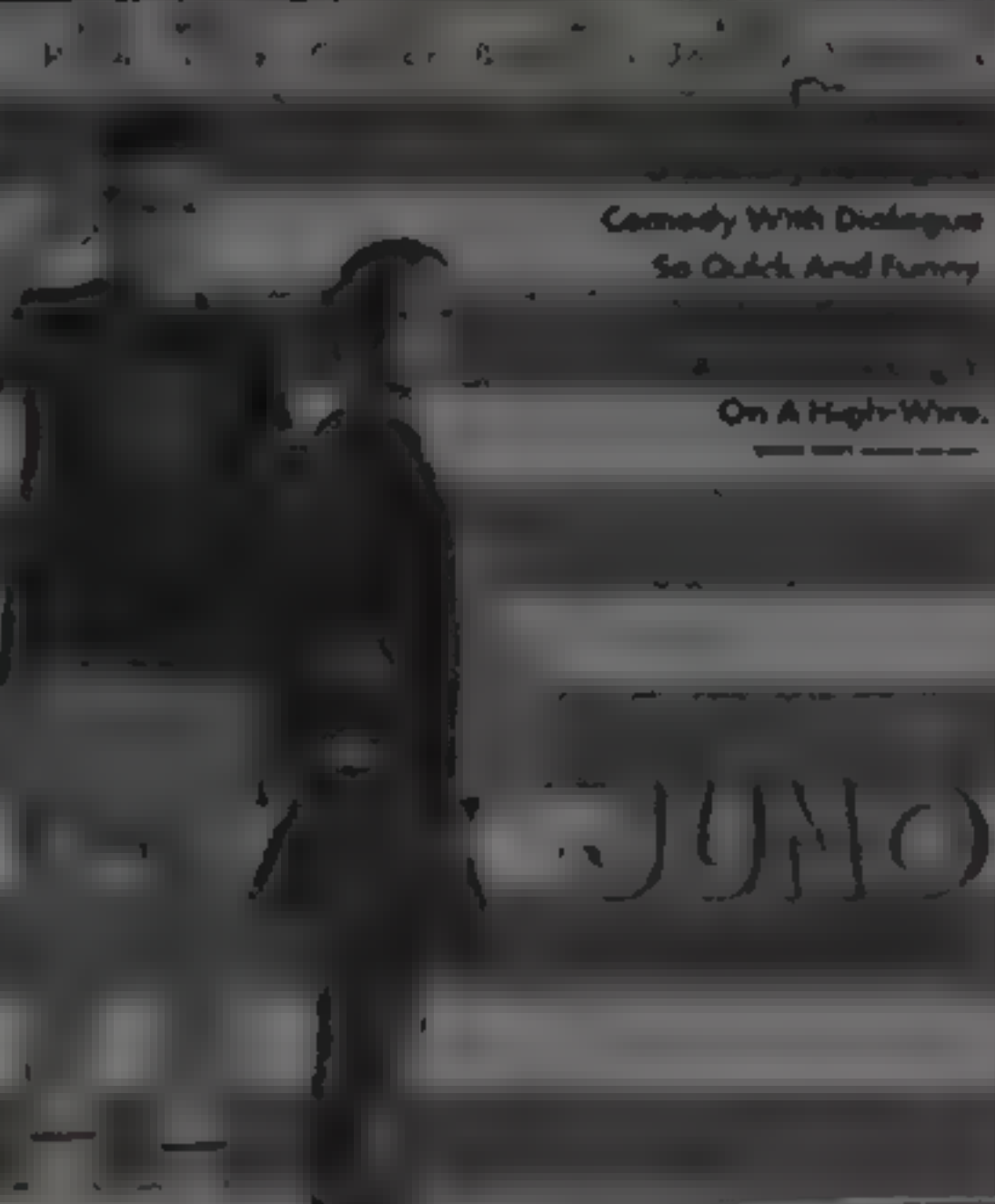


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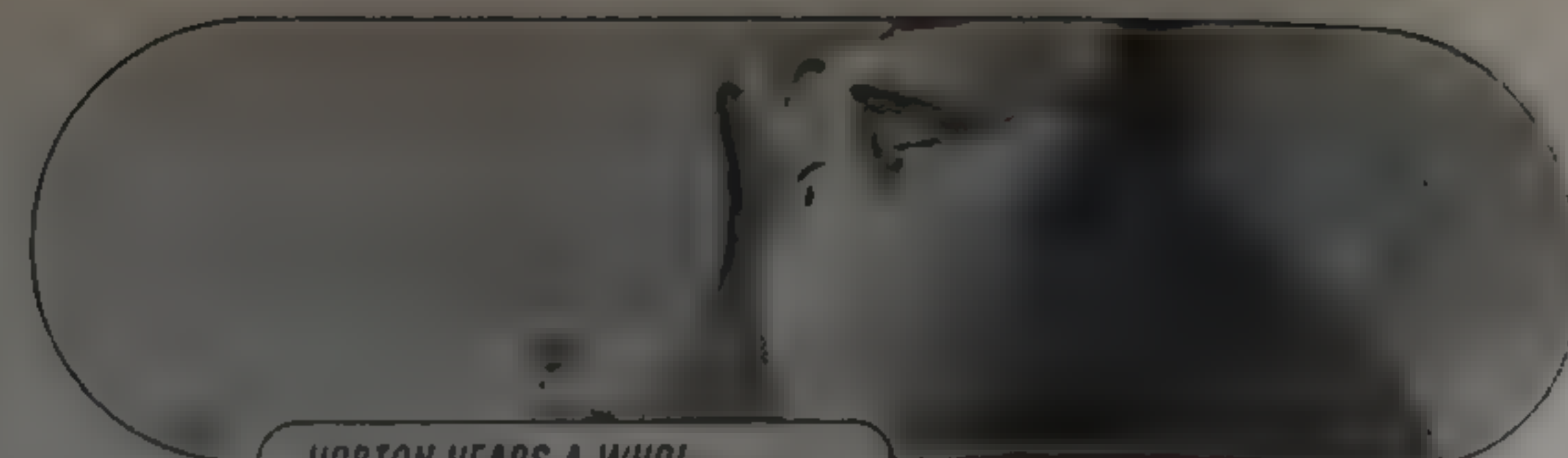
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# FILM CAPSULES



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VIVA

## OPENING THIS WEEK

**VIVA**  
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ANNA BILLER  
STARRING BILLER, CHAD ENGLAND, BRIDGET BRNO  
FRI, MAR 21, SUN, MAR 23 (7 PM)  
SAT, MAR 22, MON, MAR 24 (9:15 PM)  
METRO CINEMA 301  
★★★★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vancouverweekly.com  
"This is Jonathan. He likes really glamorous women." That's how I was once introduced, several years ago, by a friend to a visiting artist at a new media festival

in Saskatoon. I wasn't terribly offended, but I felt like I'd been figured out.

So filmmaker and actress Anna Biller should be my kind of woman, and I don't even sleep with girls. Her new erotic feature *Viva* stars herself as a dissatisfied housewife whose husband leaves her at home too often, ultimately forcing her to abandon her roost and join the circus.

Sexy circus, that is.

Barbi (Biller) is fired from her job as a secretary for refusing to be "promoted" by her boss. She takes sudden interest in a potential career as a catalogue model, only to shy away as she fears the impact it has on her marriage. But her husband Rick (Chad England) has greater concern for business trips and sport leisure than his wife, and she strays off into the call girl industry with her best friend, Sheila (Bridget Brno). The wild life takes a great liking to Barbi, who quickly changes her name to Viva, and it's not long before it starts to complicate her life. She encounters a cavalcade of great characters in bad wigs, many of whom vie for her affections until she's the centre of it all. But Barbi soon questions how long she can maintain the lifestyle, especially when there doesn't seem to be anybody left that she can trust.

Biller's film is like a memorable conversation with somebody at a party who sincerely admires the sexploitation films that began in the late 1960s, particularly those of Radley Metzger, Herschell Gordon Lewis and especially Russ Meyer, whose *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* is directly referenced in a fast-paced, stunning orgy sequence. It's a fiesta of gold speedos, transparent bras, and lots and lots of pubic hair. Biller fetishizes the period to such an extent that she centres her entire film around it, including maintaining a bizarrely banal plot and extended sequences of titties and psychedelic music. The film runs at two hours, providing an experience of excessive wank material that's not a far cry from the pre-

And of course, there's plenty of subtext that allows a post-feminist deconstruction of irony in the hands of women filmmakers, though it's so underhanded in *Viva* that it will be a long time before university collectives start re-enacting the film as a method of raising awareness. Unless, of course, that awareness regards the glory of re-creating kitsch décor, which in the case of *Viva*, become visual quotations of what it might have

looked like to live as an adult during the sexual revolution. It's the perfect date movie for couples so bound up in their own cynicism that they're able to classify the vocal style and range of their orgasms into eras before they were born.

## NOW PLAYING

**DOOMSDAY**  
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY NEIL MARSHALL  
STARRING RHONA MITRA, MALCOLM MCDOWELL  
★★★

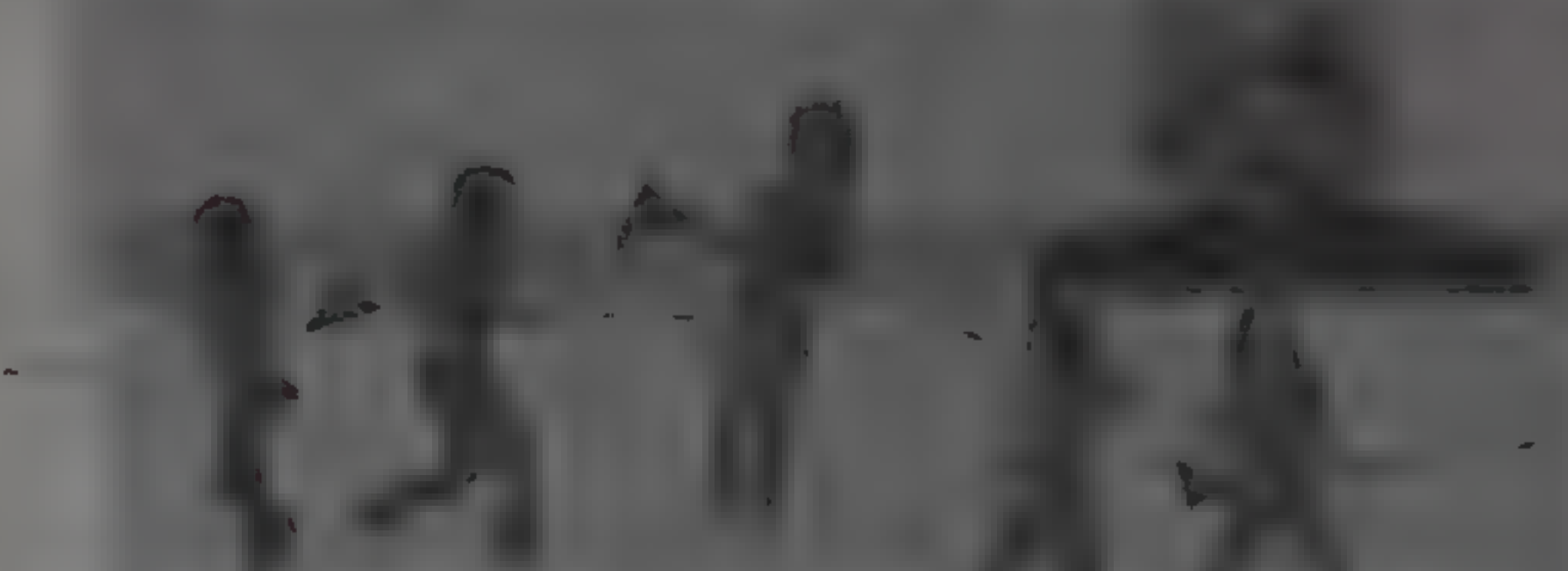
OMAR MOUALLEM / omar@vancouverweekly.com  
From the producers who loved *Escape From LA*, the writer and director who probably swears he thought of *28 Days Later* first, and the costume designer who got the *Mad Max* box set for Christmas and thought it the best Christmas ever comes *Doomsday*, a grab-bag of every post-apocalyptic film of the last 30 years.

In 2035, three decades after the reaper virus smothered the people of Scotland, forcing Great Britain to blockade the peninsula, London becomes contaminated, too. A mighty woman is sent into the ghost nation to find a handful of remaining survivors who may carry the cure. She is Eden (Rhona Mitra), a Scot who was saved by the British army when the virus first struck. Raised by the military, she possesses every martial arts skill imaginable, and has a nifty Bluetooth eye that she can roll down the corridor to ensure the coast is clear. But when she and her infantry get over the great wall and enter Glasgow, they're stunned to find a thousand-strong community of anarchists worshipping Sol (Craig Conway), the Allin of the future. Her team becomes entangled in a cyclical, seemingly endless battle and escape, only to do nothing again when they encounter the new Scottish kingdom ruled by Kane (Malcolm McDowell).

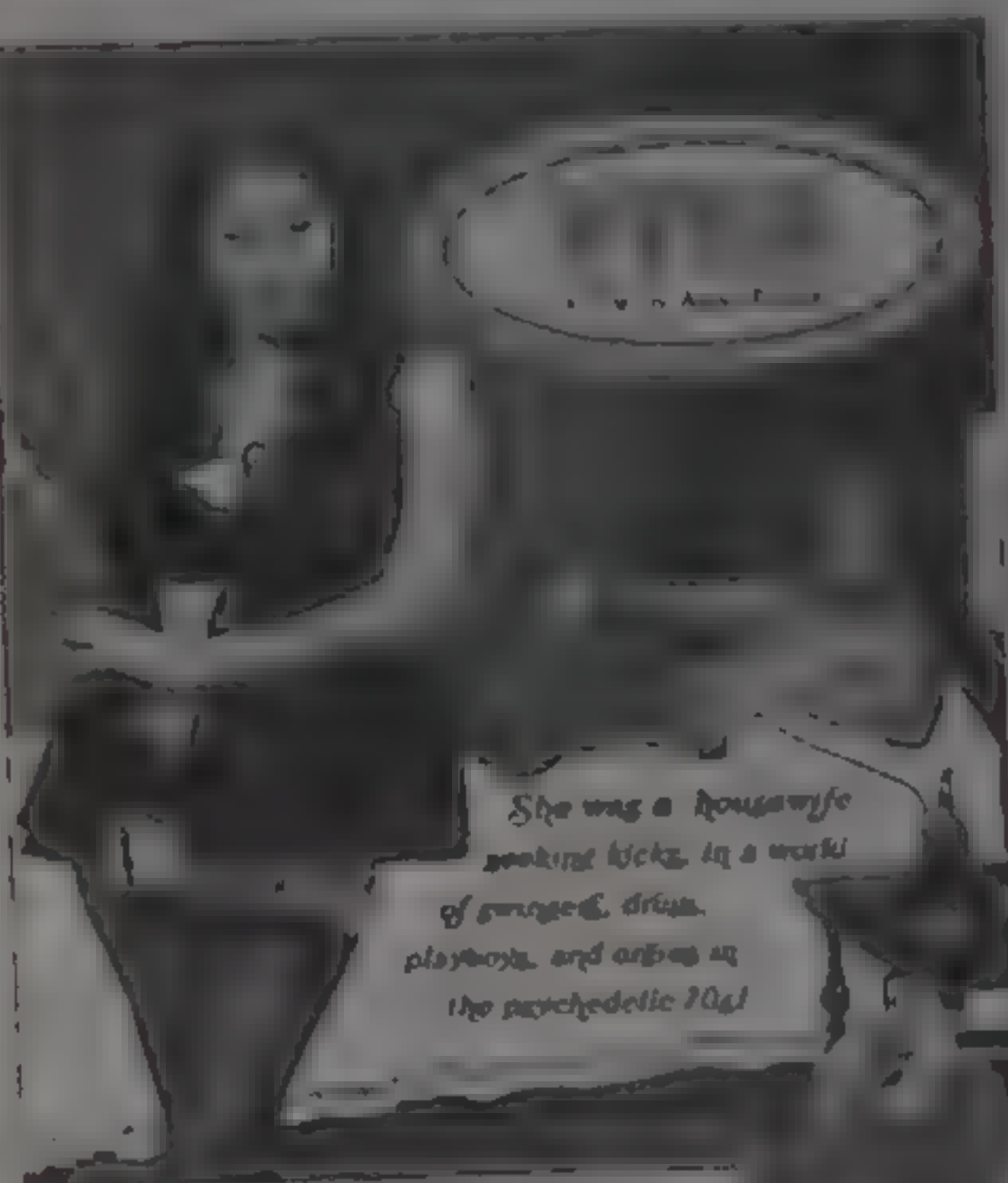
It's easy to forget what the whole of their mission is. It seems at times, the filmmakers did, too. But in days of shoot-em-up games, they considerate enough to know that if you up titillating scenarios challenge heroes, you can appease your audience. It would fit in almost perfectly on a bill with Tarantino and Rodriguez's *Grindhouse*, the disqualification being the fact that this shameless rip-off doesn't film from obscure movies, but instead it robs from some of the most memorable and

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A FILM DIRECTED BY BRUCE McDONALD  
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MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / [marychrista@vuweekly.com](mailto:marychrista@vuweekly.com)

**T**here's more space to write and reflect on the road," asserts **Jason Collett**.

"That's when you have some time for things like reading and writing. It allows me to have some pause in my life and to reflect; it makes me more lucid. Touring can also be bad, but I still enjoy everything about it—even the monotony."

Collett's at home in Toronto, preparing for the road ahead. If we can use the past as any sort of yardstick, it'll be a long and winding one: in the wake of his 2005 Arts & Crafts debut, *Idols of Exile*, the songwriter toured for months. His backing band was Paso Mino, and the process of playing live, coupled with the reflective space Collett carved out for himself in the van, forged the recently released follow up, *Here's To Being Here*.

"It takes space for me to allow songs to fully realize themselves," Cohen explains. "Honesty & Love Here Was Made" very much in the moment with songs I'd written at home or on the road or some space between. Paso Mino has a large thumbprint on the album—I went into the studio knowing what they were capable of. It was a live album, almost."

When *Idols* came out, Collett was largely unknown as a songwriter outside Toronto, where he'd long been a sturdy presence on the music scene, a couple albums under his belt and a regular slot hosting an open stage. As a guitarist, he'd fallen into the orbit of Broken Social Scene, which immersed him in music and let him step out of his life as a carpenter. *Idols* dropped around the same time as the self-titled BSS

PREVIEW

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**JASON COLLETT**  
WITH PETER ELKAS  
STARLITE ROOM, \$16

album, and it was an eyebrow-raiser when Collett chose to tour his record independently from the best-selling collective. (He remains a working member.) Collett noted *Idols* felt like his "real" debut, more than pre-Arts & Crafts release *Motor Motel Love Songs*.

While *Idols* was certainly stuffed with truly great songs, *Here's To Being Here* is an extraordinary record, well built and powerful. It has a time travel-

ing quality – a golden glow that evokes classic records that were made in the mid '60s to late '70s. The Beatles, Elton John, Bob Dylan, Rick Danko, Fleetwood Mac and the Clash have all left their mark on Collett, who's an ideal musical heir: an artist who keeps the flame of fantastic songcraft burning bright not through imitation, but by inhabiting the music he creates, connecting his influences to the present.

"I'm always amazed at some-  
one like Kevin Drew—how he can write on  
the fly. He makes shit up on a split  
second stream of consciousness," Cal

CONTINUES ON PAGE 43

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BRYAN BIRTLES / [bryan@vueweekly.com](mailto:bryan@vueweekly.com)

the stuff for Storyboard so I wanted to get to the studio and there and do everything myself," he says, noting that this new band will have some similarity to Storyboard, but this band is "completely different." "It's 100 per cent me, and I'm trying to make it a lot more diverse. When people thought of Storyboard they thought 'Radiohead' or 'Shoegaze-y'—in this band there's going to be electronic music, there's going to be some acoustic folk stuff with glockenspiel and acoustic guitars, there's a lot more vocals in the band, there's three singers in the band, so lots of lush harmonies, and I get to fool around a bit more because everyone in the band is an incredible musician."

stage fright as he prepares to put his project out there for the whole world.

"This is the first time I've ever gone up with just my name and people will be like, 'You're not that good,'" says "We go through the whole 'are the songs good enough?' thing and you always want to proceed from your last project."

"If someone says, 'His old stuff was better,' that'll kill me," he adds with laugh.

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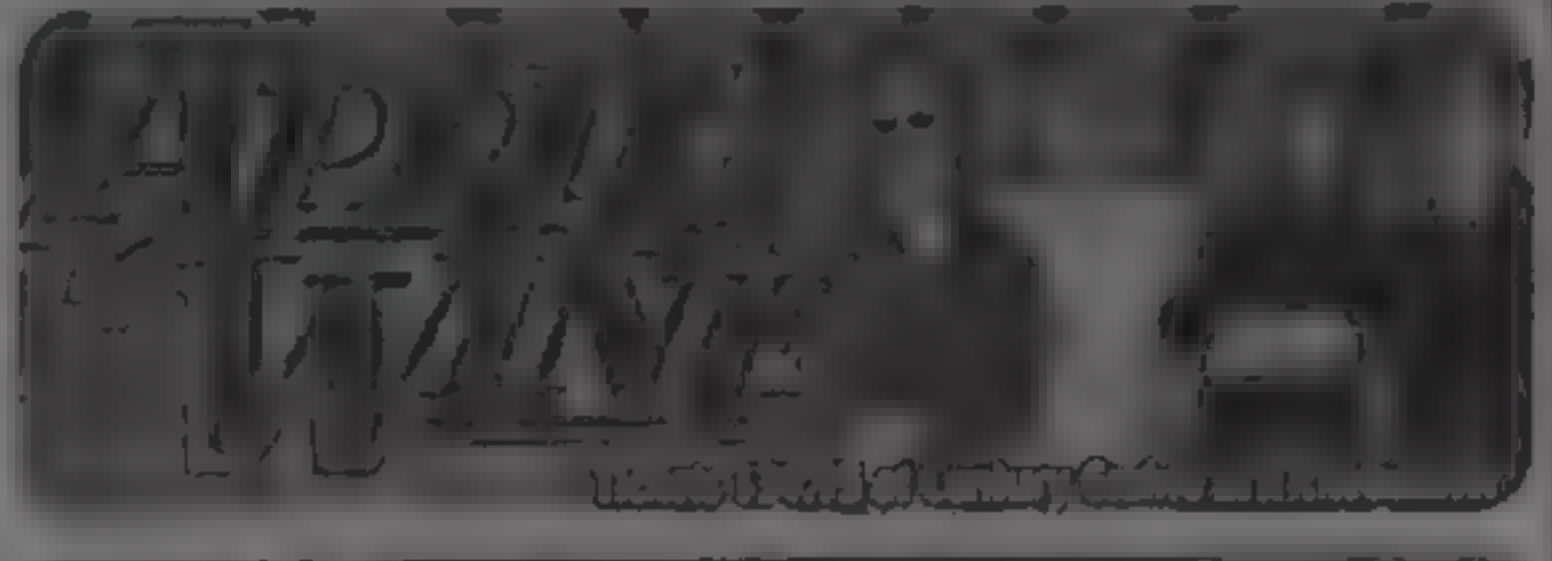


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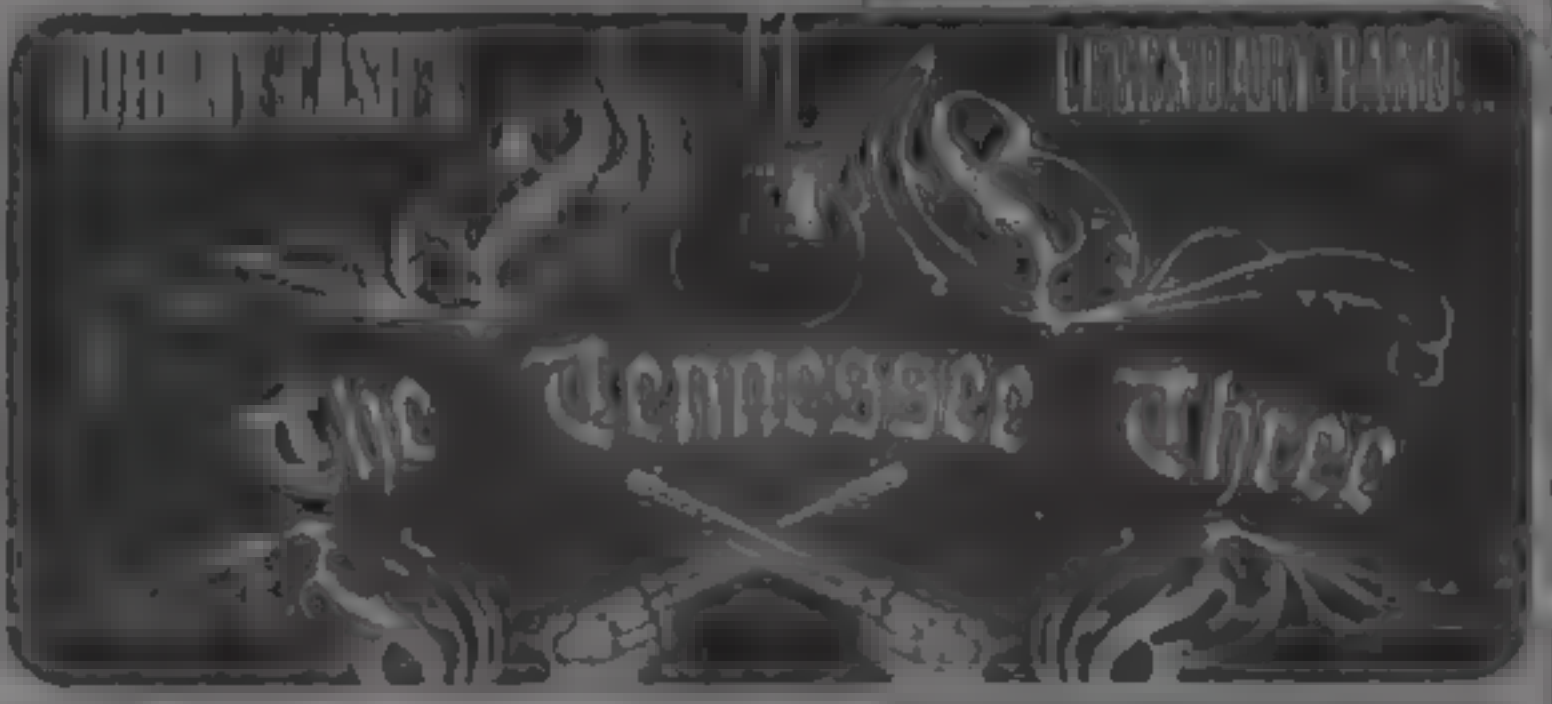
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## SXSW 2008: let the tacos fall where they may

### MUSIC BACKLASH BLUES

roland@vuwweekly.com

Edmonton is one of several cities to claim Austin, Texas as a sister city and not have it reciprocated. This is the municipal equivalent of bragging about being best friends with a fun, popular celebrity and having them go on the record as not knowing who you are. Last week I travelled to Austin for my third South by Southwest music festival experience and while the trample and blur of 6th Street was occasionally aggressive, I still feel that Austin accepted me with open arms.

South by Southwest is an entertainment trade show with a higher representation for music. It's where a few thousand bands decide to populate a single 20 block radius for four days to play a showcase, eat probably five tacos a day and walk around with their guitar cases in order to look like a musician (because you're a musician, okay?). There are lots of networking opportunities and it's truly an invaluable festival for a developing musician, even though major label acts (REM performed this year) are usually the hot ticket shows.

With the rising popularity of the festival, there's been a bottleneck effect for most of the day parties. The Levi's Fader Party was a fairly exclusive RSVP-based event that was pretty fun once you got in, but quite frustrating while waiting out-

side for 35 minutes. It reminded me of Disneyland, but only in the way that I was jealous of the other kids on the ride. I snuck in through the back and took in Lou Reed doing "Walk On The Wild Side" with Moby on rhythm guitar and NERD flipping the post-rap rock paradigm for a few hundred jumping, crazed superfans.

The waiting is the hardest part. The wait in line for the I Heart Comix parking garage bash was so long we managed to have my friend and Toronto rapper Mindbender get our party some snacks from a local convenience store. Upon getting inside, the line for free beer was the same size as the one outside, making this one-of-a-kind superparty (featuring Cut Copy, DJ Blaqstarr, Switch, Diplo & Matt and Kim among others) quite tiresome.

During SXSW, the concept of distance is drastically altered. Where one might typically walk six blocks every day to catch the LRT in Edmonton, when I mentioned I'd

be going to see Bird Peterson and Cosmo Baker DJ about the same distance away, I was greeted with shock and horror. "You'll never make it back!" they said. But, alas, I casually returned to the Beauty Bar in time for the back end of Boys Noize's set.

After parties are pretty weird at SXSW.

They are usually at random locations, typically shut down by police before long and information about them is commonly spread via mass texting. I ended up in a palatial estate with Diplo and Boys Noize playing records and Simian Mobile Disco and Damian Abraham from Fucked Up hanging around the pool. It reminded me a lot of the coming-of-age film *Can't Hardly Wait*.

Moments like these are what help make SXSW such an interesting proposition. While you can have a bad showcase and spend all day getting skin cancer in line for Vampire Weekend, there will undoubtedly be some eventual movie-like reward to make it all come together. ▽



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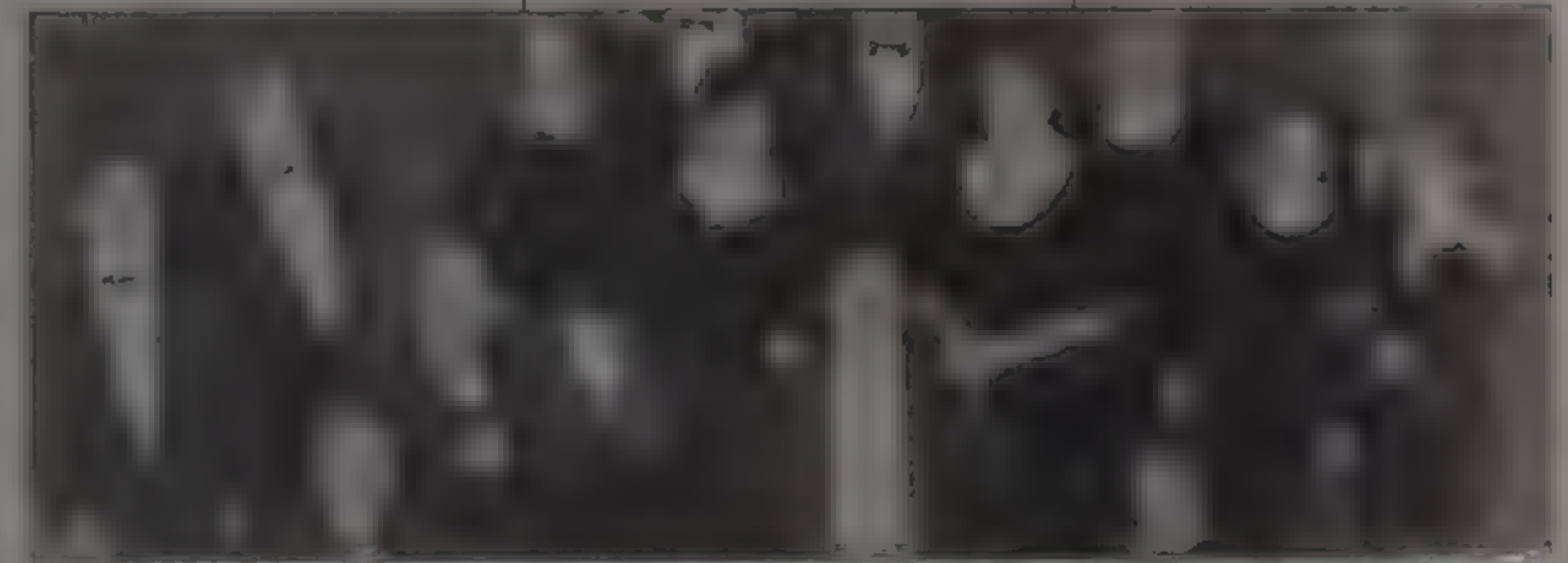
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**MATTHEW BARBER**  
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EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

"It's my first time down here, so it's all new," Matthew Barber says over the line from his hotel room in Austin, Texas, where he's settling in for a few showcases at South by Southwest, along with a little reprieve from the Ontario weather that he's left behind. "Yesterday was great. It was warm and sunny, which is a nice change of pace from the six-foot snowdrifts in Toronto."

The sheer volume of live music that fills the streets during SXSW is something that Barber is excited about at the moment, admitting that he doesn't get the chance to check out as much new music as he'd like to since he started touring and touring himself.

I used to be really excited about discovering new bands, and I still like to

think that I am, but I just don't get out to see as much," he explains. "This is actually a good opportunity for me to be in a condensed area where I can check out a bunch of new bands all in the span of a few days."

While Barber is no stranger to playing with a full band, in recent times he's done a fair amount of touring solo, and he says that the experience has influenced his latest album, *Ghost Notes*.

"I've been enjoying the connection between my songs and the audience that's really evident when it's just me playing solo, so I think that influenced the recording of the album," he reflects. "I did still get my friends to play on it and flesh it out, but I guess the band on this record is playing more of a supportive role than they ever have before."

Barber says that it was a conscious decision to strip things down for the new record, explaining that his goal was to take a different approach than he had on his last album.

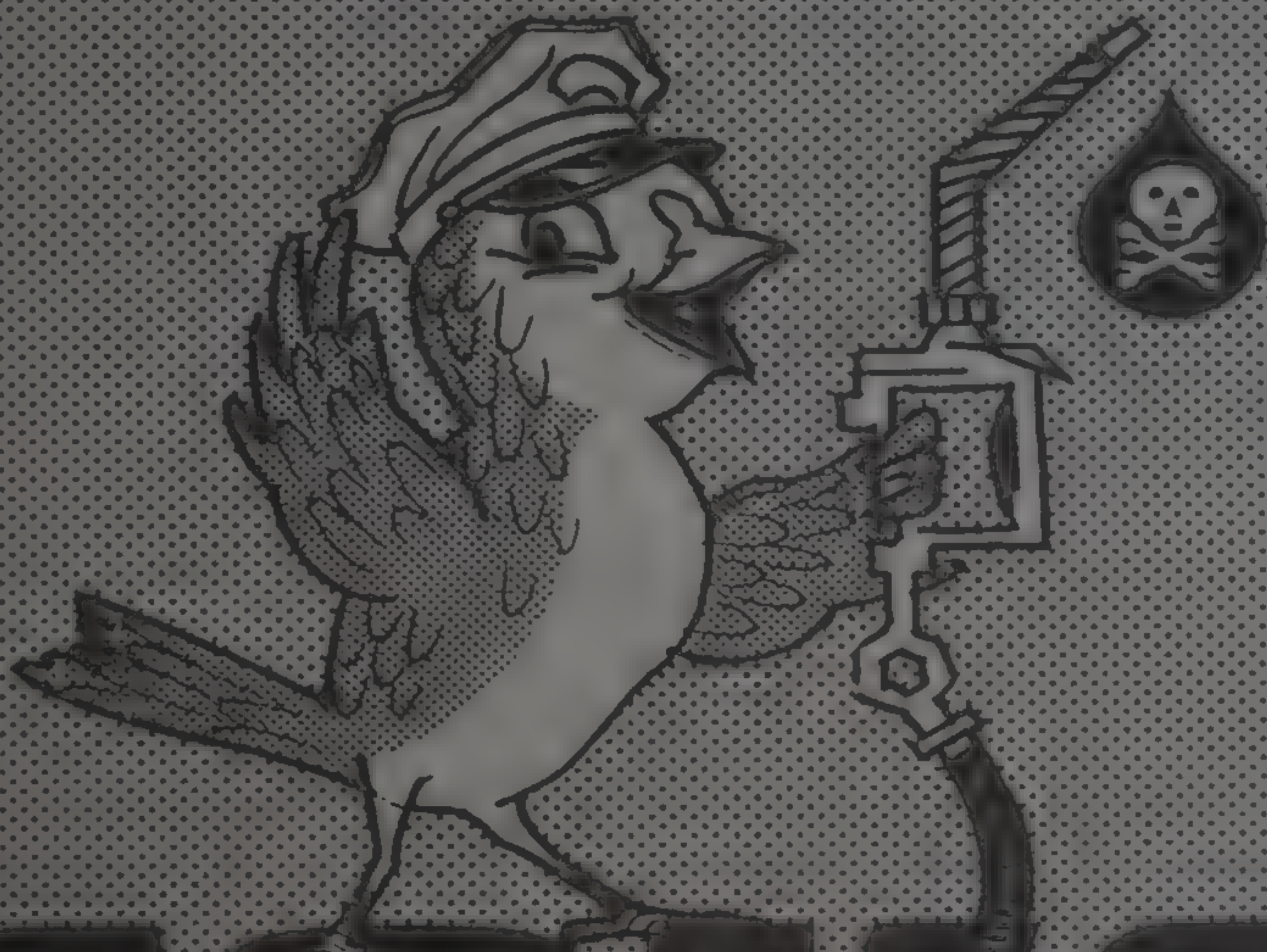
"I wanted to get away from the kind of

hyped up loud electric guitars and drums that I had on the last record, which is fun and makes for great high-energy rock songs, but it doesn't always make for a record that people want to listen to over and over again when they're sitting around at home, because it's loud," he laughs. "This one, I wanted to take a subtler approach to everything."

The songwriter's stop at SXSW comes in the middle of his current tour, the Sibling Rivalry Tour, which he is sharing with his sister, Jill Barber. Despite the jaunt's name, though, there's really not a whole lot of competition involved in the trek, with the two of them even sharing the Seviles as their backup band.

"We're each doing our own set with a bit of crossover," he notes. "She's singing on a few of my songs and I'm playing and singing on a handful of her songs as well. It's kind of separated but never completely separated, and we're sharing the same band the whole night. At the end of the night we're all up there for the last five or six tunes." ▽

ON SALE NOW



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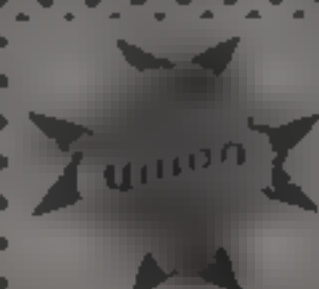
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LIVE NATION





## The Busker's Ball puts Daniel Buxton and others up on the stage

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vuwweekly.com

**P**EPER SODA MIGHT BE OUT OF MY case or whatever, and I've chased people down for five dollars before because you just can't take that. You've got to be tough."

When some people think of busking, they think of steal drum players on a beach, saxophone players in a Chicago alley or a San Francisco drum circle. When Edmontonians think of busking, they think of Daniel Buxton. He's out there when you need him, singing and playing through all weather on Whyte Avenue. When you're headed home to pass out, he's just settling into his fourth or fifth hour of the night, trying to squeeze a little bit extra out of it.

Leaving a troubled home at a young age, Buxton could think of no other way to make money than by playing on the street, which is what he did and has been doing for a long time. But all the time he's put into his art hasn't led to the kind of respect he deserves.

I played for 15 hours a day, six days a week, for two years before I could afford to play less. I'm doing music for a living, which most musicians I know aren't doing and they get respect and I don't," he says. "By playing on the street it makes me a pariah—it's an automatic categorization."

Though he's somewhat of a legend in the street, Buxton has been, for some years now, trying to move beyond the pigeonhole that people have insisted on putting him into. An

PREVIEW

FRI, MAR 21 (6:30 PM)  
THE BUSKER'S FIFTH BALL  
**DANIEL BUXTON**  
WITH MICHELLE BOUDREAU, BILL CARLEY, DAN HENDRIX EXPERIENCE, THE BRIAN GREGG TRIO, TOM ROSCHOKOV, ALLAN SUAREZ  
NAKED ON JASPER, DONATIONS

integral part of the currently on-hiatus hip-hop collective Eshod Ibn Wyza, Buxton has also started his own band called the DB Buxton Revue, and holds a regular Tuesday night performance at the Savoy Lounge.

He may have some regular indoor gigs now, but it took 11 years before anyone offered him a chance.

"Nobody wants to hear about [my bands] because they just want me to be the funny-haired guy who plays on the street," he says. "It's disturbing to me that nobody thinks there's something wrong with me playing on the street for 13 years even though it's obvious I can do so much more."

Buxton is branching out into performance spaces where the money comes in an envelope afterwards, but he says that busking on the street has given him some distinct advantages.

"Stage fright is hilarious to me—it's like, where's the danger? You've got a microphone and a stage there, what's the matter?" he asks rhetorically. "I play on the street with no protection and there's drunk, violent guys there who didn't get laid, backed away from a fight they wish they'd gotten into, they want you to play this Led Zepelin song and you don't know it, and they're getting crazy."

**WHILE IT MAY SEEM** as though it would be hard for someone who has led a largely solitary artistic life for so many years to transition into the cooperative world of bands, you'd be mistaken.

"I always thought I couldn't get along with other people which is why it took me so long to get into bands. Eshod was good because everyone was so strange within the group that I could just be myself, too," he says, before explaining how the Revue works out competing creative impetuses. "Opinions are opinions, but what works works. If someone is doing something that works better than what I'm doing, then that's what we'll do. I think I have a strong creative vision and I don't have any fear of anyone derailing it because if I'm right it should be obvious, and if I'm wrong we'll do it another way."

Buxton is excited about this year's Busker's Ball, hoping it will bring more respectability to his profession, but he's not counting on it. He'll keep working with his band, playing on the street, hoping to eventually leave busking behind. It may be tough, though, because for all the bad things he's experienced, there is a feeling that cannot be matched in any indoor venue.

"The good thing about busking is that it's so personal—when people are enjoying it you can see them, they're a foot away from you. It's very intimate," he says. "I could write a book. I don't think people would want to read it, but one day I'll write it." v

See exclusive video of Busker's Ball performers Michelle  
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**THURSDAY MARCH 27** THE WOMEN PRESENTS, FALCON DISCO  
**MINUS THE BEAR**  
WITH SYLVIE & PASSENGER ACTION

**FRIDAY MARCH 28** THE WOMEN PRESENTS, FALCON DISCO  
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## Just call Webber one of the guys

ALYSSA NOEL / [alysso@vuwweekly.com](mailto:alysso@vuwweekly.com)

Gielle Webber, front woman for **Hot Springs** can rock out, but now she's set to try something new: claymation. She's starring in an upcoming National Film Board production about two acrobatic Siamese twin sisters. When the animator who sought her out described the project as a "trippy, nightmare circus," she was sold.

"I also really like animation," she explains from her hotel room in Austin, Texas where the band is playing several South by Southwest showcases. "I'm kind of a big nerd about that shit."

Because the group is in the middle of its first tour since releasing *Volcano*, its debut full-length disc, at the end of Sep 2007, she's had to find creative ways to finish the score by its April deadline.

"When I'm in the shower I try to sing because I don't have time for myself to think up songs when there's a bunch of people around me," she explains. "I sing into my cell phone and record it sometimes."

To the high strung it might sound like a nightmare way to produce a piece of creative work, but, luckily, Webber embodies a brand of musician that has been nearly extinct since rock's heyday in the '70s: she's fucking cool.

It's evident in her laid-back nature, her indifferent approach to the industry and her tales of excessive partying. But the most convincing proof is her ability to wail on guitar and blast her voice with the same intensity as any of the rock gods to whom she has been compared.

"I like it when people compare me to dude singers," she says. "I think it's weird when you're a girl singer and there's only five other singers they can compare you to. Like, 'Oh, she sounds like Joan Jett or Hole or something like that.' There's such a short list I'm just stoked people are comparing girls to dudes."

PREVIEW

FRI, MAR 21 (8 PM)  
**HOT SPRINGS**  
WITH FROSTED TIPZ, RED RAM  
VELVET UNDERGROUND, \$10

**ALTHOUGH WEBBER IS** the chief songwriter, her bandmates (bassist Frederic Sauve and drummer Anne Gauthier) provide the inspiration to create exceptional songs.

"It's a trip because the people in our band are all these Québécois country boys, and they'd never left Québec before they joined the band," she says. "The first time we went to fucking Toronto our bass player was like, 'Whoa, it's the big city.' Then we went to New York and it blew his mind ... He hadn't been on a plane before so it pushed me to get the record out, not to make money from it, but to go on those adventures to have everyone in the band go along for the ride. So I feel this weight on my shoulders to write good songs."

Currently, the group only has distribution in Canada and, therefore, tours primarily in this country. But Webber expects that to change after SXSW. A few American labels have expressed interest, but the details are still being sorted out. After industry hot shots witness the group's fabled live show at the event, the market is likely to be in the seller's favour.

Webber, however, prefers to stay humble and cautiously optimistic.

"People write so much stuff about us live, I feel, like, this pressure. I don't think we're that crazy," she says.

On second thought, she warns Edmonton fans that will be at the band's show on Mar 21: "I might spit on you. I feel like I sing better if I don't have as much spit in my mouth. Just for the front row, don't wear black." ▾

PREVIEW

MON, MAR 24 (8 PM)  
**HAWKSLEY WORKMAN**  
WINSPEAR CENTRE, \$32.50

EDEN MUNRO / [eden@vuwweekly.com](mailto:eden@vuwweekly.com)

"I think when you're a musician you're not a fan of any holiday, because they don't really pertain to you—I've been on planes on Christmas day to get to gigs," Hawksley Workman says over a cell phone as he navigates through the streets of Toronto on St Patrick's Day. "Holidays are for other people. I don't know who they're for, but they're not for me. Because I think my job is so much about being in bars and partying and drinking and being an idiot, when that day is set aside for everybody else to do it, I'd just rather be at home."

"I was at a meeting at lunch today and saw somebody drinking a green beer," he continues, chuckling as he wraps up his rant. "I just think, 'Oh, man.' I don't need any reason to drink food colouring just for a laugh."

Workman is in a chatty mood as he tries to enjoy a couple of days off in the midst of his current cross-Canada tour. There's no stopping him once he gets going, and he happily expands upon his suggestion that his life is rooted in playing music in a nightlife filled with an endless stream of bars.

"It's funny, I say that—that I've been in bars—but I really haven't been for a long time," he explains further. "I guess what I'm more alluding to is, whether I'm in a bar or whether I'm in a theatre, there's still more drinking being done than I would like. Why go out and party on St Patrick's Day when for better or for worse my life is a long, drawn out party that I'm trying to keep under control."

"I've been doing theatres now for the last couple of Canadian tours and it is just bloody glorious," he says, turning the subject towards his current situation both on stage and off. "I'm a morning person, so I like to get off stage, go to bed and wake up at six in the morning and go running or something."

"When I was really boozing hard, it made being a morning person all the more difficult because I just can't sleep," he continues with a reflection on the past before bringing his thoughts full circle. "So, regardless, I'm up at seven. Doesn't matter what time I went to bed. I'm a lot more friendly to my body now, so for the sake of the snakes leaving Ireland, I certainly don't need to tie another one on."

Workman might not be into the spectacle of green beer, but that doesn't mean he has no interest in theatrics, at least when it comes to the stage. In fact, he says that he's letting that side of himself out on his current tour, taking a more theatrical approach to the live performances. Despite having a tight structure for the show, though Workman believes that in some ways the actual music is the loosest it has ever been.

"Oh, totally. Absolutely. In fact, for me in my sanity it leaves more room for spontaneity," he enthuses. "I like to take things out of my brain that could possibly be disruptive, and wondering what song we're going to play—there's some things that I can control that I just love having sorted out, and that's one of them. It lets me have a mind free enough then to wander in different directions."

"I don't have to be worrying about if the band's going to fuck up something because it hasn't been rehearsed enough," he exclaims. "I know it's going to be smooth and solid, and with that context we're all be a little more flexible with our interpretation—just 'cause we all know what page we're on." ▾







# Music is the best medicine for getting *Beyond the Dover*

GEM HANDLEY / [gem@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:gem@vancouverweekly.com)

Since 1927, the Dover Hotel has sat on the corner of 127 Avenue and 120 Street as a watering hole for CN railway workers to unwind after their shifts. It's also a place that evokes a lot of strong emotions in singer **Susan Wheatley's** heart.

"My father was an alcoholic," she says. "Him and his coworkers would go to the Dover after work to drink."

"Since I was a child, about three or four, the Dover Hotel has always symbolized a bad place for me," she adds without a hint of bitterness. "But I'm over that now."

The reason why Wheatley has been able to move on has a lot to do with her debut CD, *Beyond The Dover*, which will be released at the Blue Chair Café on Mar 22.

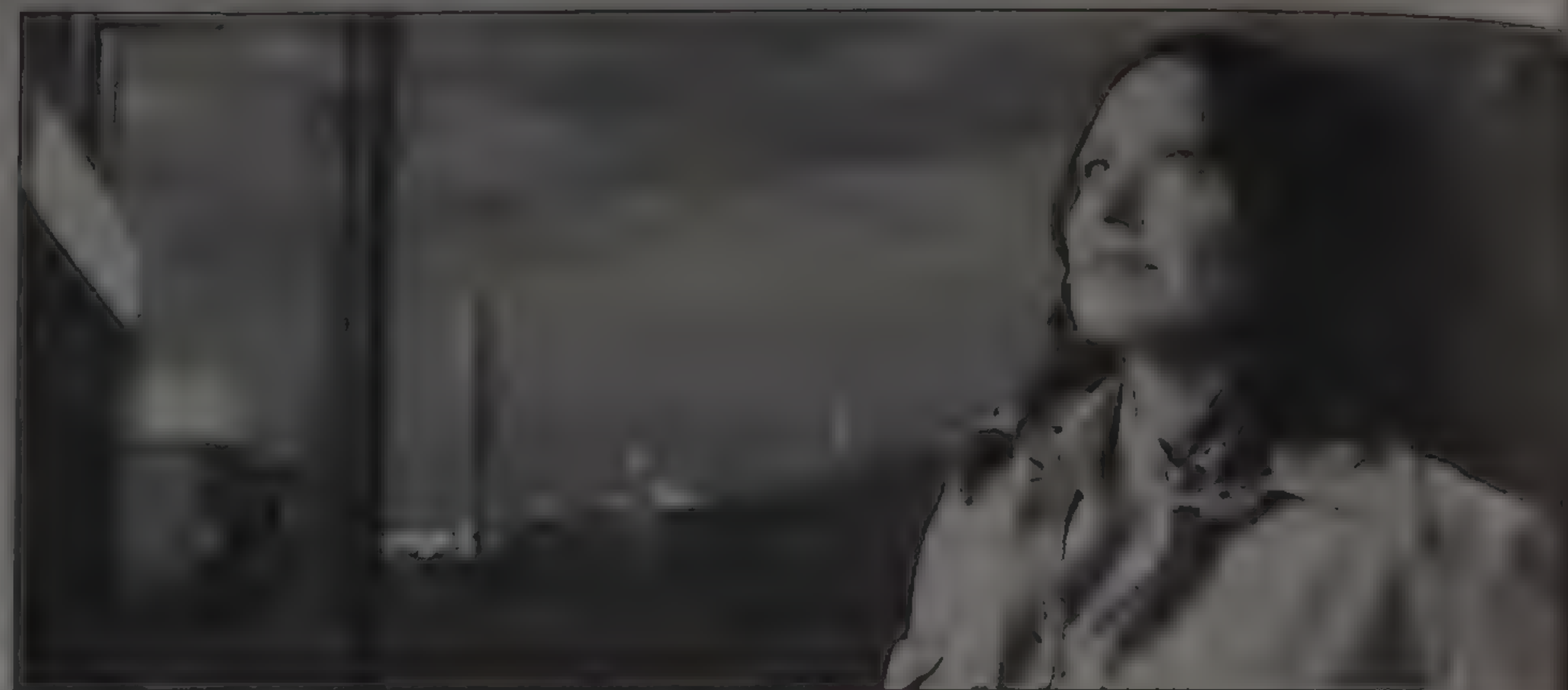
Truly a cathartic experience for the singer, Wheatley wears all of her

PREVIEW  
SAT. MAR 22 10:00 PM  
**SUSAN WHEATLEY**  
BLUE CHAIR CAFE, 516 JARDINACE, 118 VANDERBILT  
SHE'S CHUCKER AND SHAW

heart on the album. From mental illness to physical abuse, Wheatley's songs explore every corner of those dark years with her father and his addiction. The end result is an empowered woman ready to deal with the past.

"When you grow up in an addictive household with an addictive parent, you learn how to hide your feelings and suppress them," the songwriter says. "I've started to deal with them and I wrote a lot of these songs to help me get over my emotions."

But despite the darker lyrical content of her album, the charismatic and at times bubbly singer is



ready to charge forward with her sincere songs and contagious optimism, explaining that she hopes

that her music will encourage the healing process for people who have been in the same situation or who are going through the same experiences.

**EVEN THOUGH SHE'S** now a resident of Calgary, Wheatley has looked to Edmonton for more than ghosts of her childhood. She recorded her CD at Riverdale Recorders, a local studio, and also credits CKUA as a serious muse for making this record.

"It really inspired me to tell my story and get real," she says passionately. "Some of the artists I've heard on CKUA taught me to be

more vulnerable and lay it all out there.

"It's kind of crazy how much I am throwing out there," Wheatley continues, laughing. "All the songs are very personal and they're like a diary of my life."

The 41-year-old says it was an interesting experience going back to the Dover Hotel to do the photo shoot for the CD cover.

"Honestly, I had this sense of relief and I felt at peace," she says quietly. "I was looking up at the sky, thinking of the old man and throwing out some love. I was telling him it's all good." ▽

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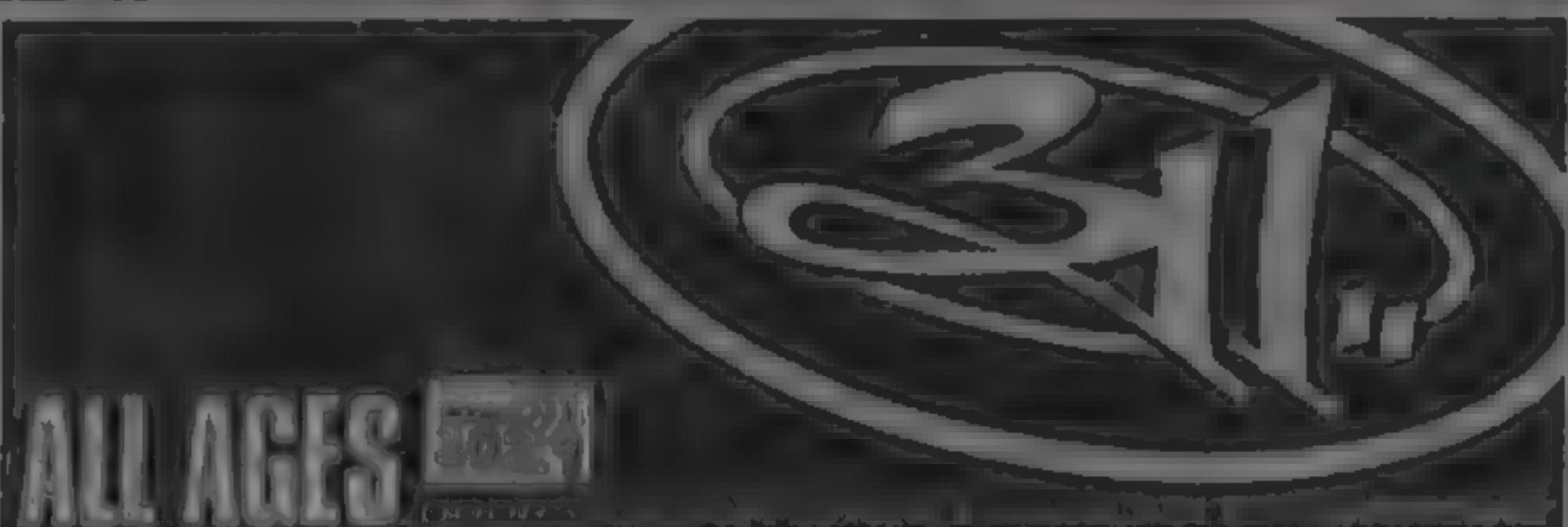




## EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

SAT  
MAR  
22

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MAR  
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ALL AGES

TUE  
APR  
01WED  
APR  
03GROOVE ARMADA  
SOUNDBOY ROCK DJ TOURTHU  
APR  
04

BRAWL AT THE MALL

A MIXED MARTIAL ARTS EVENT

WED  
APR  
09

ALL AGES

MON  
APR  
14PROTEST THE HERO  
THE FALL OF TROY

ALL AGES

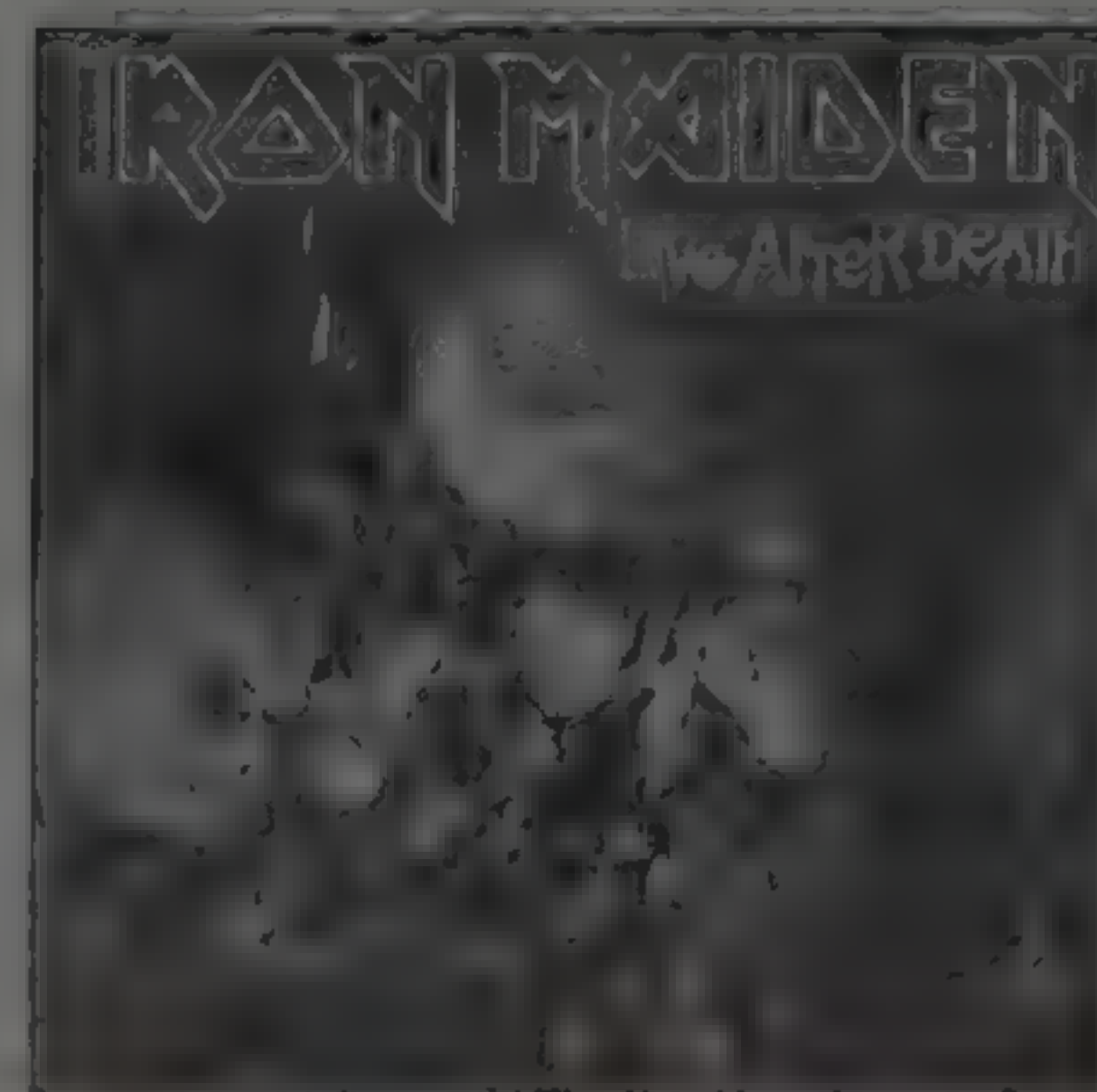
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MAY 23 KILLSWITCH ENGAGE#2556 8882-170 ST. (WEST EDM MALL) • 489-SHOW  
EDMONTONEVENTCENTRE.CAIRON MAIDEN  
LIVE AFTER DEATH (DVD)  
EMI

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vnuweekly.com

Iron Maiden set out in 1984 to support its latest album *Powerslave* on the World Slavery Tour. It was a mammoth undertaking, with the band performing 193 shows around the world in nearly a year of touring, with only a few short breaks scattered throughout the itinerary. The scale of the production was huge as well, with an Egyptian-styled stage set, some serious pyrotechnics and a massive, mummified Eddie—the band's mascot—looming overhead.

Somewhere around the three-quarter mark of the tour, Maiden settled in for a four-night stand at Long Beach Arena in Los Angeles. A double live album, *Live After Death*, was drawn from these dates along with another stand at the Hammersmith Odeon in the UK earlier in the tour, while an accompanying video of the same name captured a full show from the LA stand. Long out of print, the video has finally made its way to DVD in a two-disc set, with the original concert, featuring both the original stereo mix and a new 5.1 surround mix, taking up the first DVD and a host of extras both old and new filling the second.

The performance is impressive for many reasons. Revisiting a visual document of a 1985 live performance in 2008, the first things that jump out are, well, the visuals. There's the fog machine that conjures up images of *This is Spinal Tap* as the musicians bow their heads in all seriousness as they focus on their performances. There's the feather mask that Singer Bruce Dickinson wore for *The Trooper*. And then there's the spandex. Yes, the spandex. The band, Iron Maiden, a monster



of rock, is decked out in spandex—and not just any spandex, either. Drummer Nicko McBrain looks as though he belongs in a wrestling ring with his colourful outfit.

But then, that was all par for the course visually in '85, and it's really the music that elevates this release to the upper echelons of metal performances. All five members of Maiden give everything they have, going the distance for the entire concert. Dickinson is a bit stiff in his staccato delivery of the opening tracks, "Aces High" and "2 Minutes to Midnight," but he quickly warms up and then he's all over the stage, running and jumping while still hitting most of the notes he needs to hit.

The rest of the band is right there, too, even on the epic "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which nears 15 minutes in length and finds Maiden going from fast to slow to fast again in an impressive showcase of both dynamics and melody. Anyone who thinks that metal has to be abrasive and forgettable would do well to take notice of this song.

Over on the second disc, there are the obligatory bits and pieces culled from the past—videos for a couple of songs, a photo gallery and some choppy footage of Maiden's solid perform-

ance at the initial Rock in Rio festival, in front of an audience of some 300,000 people—but while those are just fine, it's the extended cut of the '85 video *Behind the Iron Curtain* and the new documentary *The History of Iron Maiden* that will be the real finds for the band's fans.

*Behind the Iron Curtain* is essentially a compilation of home video footage from the band's tour of Eastern Europe, interspersed with some from the shows (featuring Dickinson in a stunning blue shirt-yellow spandex ensemble). It's not an in-depth study of the first big rock production to make it to the area, but rather a postcard-like overview that includes some interesting glimpses into Maiden's world. It's interesting to see the band interacting with fans—including the Polish military, who turn out to be largely kids who are just as into the band as the other fans, brandishing photos of Maiden alongside their weapons. The group even goes so far as to perform an impromptu performance of Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water" at a wedding.

*The History of Iron Maiden* is a review doc that does an admirable job of chronicling the time involved in writing and recording *Powerslave* through the end of the World Slavery Tour, featuring plenty of anecdotes from members of the band and its crew, the doc captures everything from the initial excitement of putting out a new album and undertaking what was one of the largest tours of the time, all the way through to the end a year later when the members were all too ready to go their separate ways. A real sense of the exhaustion that the band felt emanates from the members as they look back on the experience, but there's also an awareness of just how much they accomplished in the face of a remarkable lack of airplay and stereotypical metal fan reception.

ADAM GREEN  
SIXES & SEVENS  
Epic

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vnuweekly.com

I was a really big fan of Adam Green's former band the Moldy Peaches, certainly enjoyed his last album, but this one is a little too scattered to enjoy as a cohesive whole. It's bad by any means—in fact there are some moments where it sounds like some of his best work ever. The twist and turn, the music does whatever he wants and the subject matter is manic and ridiculous enough to satisfy any old fan. But not all the time. And at 20 tracks long, it's not even 10 per cent of the time. So is it his best album, or even a very good one? Not really, but like I said there are some absolutely amazing songs here that you should hit up on iTunes.

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05. afterparty babies cadence weapon	10. red, yellow & blue born ruffians



SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

This Riot Life, Vancouver's prolific singer, songwriter and keyboardist Veda Hille has turned her formidable talents and creative attentions to matters of faith. More than half of the album's 13 tracks borrow their lyrics or draw inspiration from Christian hymnals, and one, "Oh Come On," is constructed entirely from the opening lines of United Church hymns. As one would expect, the music that accompanies such spiritual content is full and soaring, with a backing of brass and woodwinds from a professional orchestra.

While Hille draws much of her inspiration from Scripture, she also offers up touching personal glimpses ("Sleepers") and even a look at the ritualized Japanese brothels known in Japan as soapland ("Soapland Serenade"). It all comes together in what is a moving and at times intensely personal musical offering.

## THE KILLS MIDNIGHT BOOM RELAND

LEWIS KELLY / lewis@vueweekly.com

Midnight Boom has a strange, almost intangible charisma. Its parents, American-British duo the Kills, are rock stars fully extended—talented, egotistical, pretentious and captivating. The group's latest record epitomizes the stripped-down, minimalist vibe that it is known for. A typical track has a drum machine dutifully plunking away with a few select samples in support of the simple riffs of guitarist Jamie Hince and laconic vocals of Alison Mosshart. Sometimes the formula falls flat on its face—see "Hook and Line" or "URA Fever," which opens the album. More often than not, though, *Midnight Boom* blows you away with "Tape Song" or "Sleep and Cheerful."

## STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JACKS REAL EMOTIONAL TRASH WARRIOR

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

Of course, Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks' "Somebody Stopped into the Trash" is the opening track of their new album. It's a Pavement tribute, and it's Malkmus' finest. Real emotional, with a relative's concise definition of his career since splitting from the iconic '90s band. He's never tried to piss off at least half of Pavement fandom no matter what he releases. Malkmus and long-time collaborators the Jicks have managed to make a new, cracked Ram-esque album that is, at times, sometimes a little more like a '70s band, sometimes a little more like a '90s band, sometimes a little more like a '70s band, sometimes a little more like a '90s band.

Malkmus mixes it up on *Trash*, from the heavy tracks like opener "Dragon" to the catchy "Lullaby" to the lighter, more melodic "Hops and Pops." With "Out of Reach," Malkmus shows a side of himself reminiscent of the good old days. It's a return to form that Pavement fans will appreciate ... except for the half who hate it.

# The majors are starting to change their tune

## MUSIC ENTER SANDOR STEVEN SANDOR steven@vueweekly.com

Like pretty well every music journalist out there, I used to get more promotional CDs than I knew what to do with. But, as more and more PR people are choosing electronic press kits and encouraging the media to listen to a band's music on the internet, the number of discs that come across my Toronto desk nowadays comes nowhere close to the amount I used to get back in the days when I edited *Vue*.

But, last week, I got a promo package which had me engrossed. Roadrunner Records, part of the Warner Music family, sent me an advance copy of *Move Every Muscle, Make Every Sound*, the new album from Nashville buzz-band De Novo Dahl.

It wasn't the music, though, that inspired this column; it was the announcement at the bottom of the press release that said "Move Every Muscle, Make Every Sound is available via all digital retailers Mar 25, 2008!"

See what got me excited? An album that has ties to Warner Music but will only be released digitally. The majors have always been the ones that have done whatever they can to champion the status quo when it comes to physical CDs, so it's a shocker to see one of them put out an album by download only.

I contacted Roadrunner's Toronto office and confirmed that the album would be released "strictly online." What made it all the more ironic is that,

in the press kit, I was actually sent a CD copy of the new album, with the shiny purple CD sleeve and all.

"In terms of the digital release, yes it is somewhat of a new approach that we're taking with certain releases," said Dean Pogue, national director of promotions and publicity for Roadrunner. "We do have a number of bands that we are very committed to and feel that the best approach is to get their music out to the masses through grassroots means as opposed to the big-marketing-machine approach."

Roadrunner will be putting out the new record from Parlor Mob, another American buzz-band out in March using the digital-only method, as well.

OK, we all know that Radiohead and Nine Inch Nails have both released albums digitally. But both of those acts made their moves when they were out of contracts and had the freedom to share their music in any way fit. And Radiohead eventually did sign a deal and put out *In Rainbows* in a traditional physical format, and the indications from Trent Reznor are that NIN's new series of albums will get some kind of CD releases, too.

In the end, when it comes to De Novo Dahl, this isn't a case of a major band using its money and power to say fuck you to the music biz. This is a sign that the industry is accepting change. And, for all the indie record shop owners out there, this is a scary development, indeed. ▽

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

## HAIKU QUICK SPINS WHITEY AND TB PLAYER quickspins@vueweekly.com

### CARBON/SILICON THE LAST POST CAROLINE

Punk rock old timers still raise a ruckus for DOWN WITH ARTHURIST!

### MIKE OLDFIELD MUSIC OF THE SPHERES UNIVERSAL

Epic, sweeping score! For long, slow strolls out of the Movie theatre

### DUCHESS SAYS ANTHOLOGIE DES 3 PERCHOIRS ALIBI

French Buzzsaw synth rock. Don't know what they're sayin' but They're sayin' it well

### THE CRASH TEST DUMMIES THE BEST OF THE CRASH TEST DUMMIES SONY/JMG

Mmm mmm mmm mmm, mmm mmm mmm. Mmm! Mmm mmm mmm mmm!

### DOES IT OFFEND YOU, YEAH? YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF INTO RED INK

Shitty burned promo Fucked up my machine, and that Does offend me, yeah

### SOULS IN RHYTHM SOULS IN RHYTHM SOUL MOTION

Funky white dude soul The guys want to sleep with them Girls want to be them

### AFROMAN WAITING TO INHALE HH


Hilarious shit! If you're mentally stunted, Or just 12 years old

### THE SERVICE INDUSTRY LIMITED COVERAGE SALADPEP

Straight forward rockers That can make Bryan Adams Seem edgy and weird

### THE BURNETTES NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE CORNER

Sludgy rock dirges Drag their asses like a bunch Of city workers



# FULL MOON FOLK CLUB

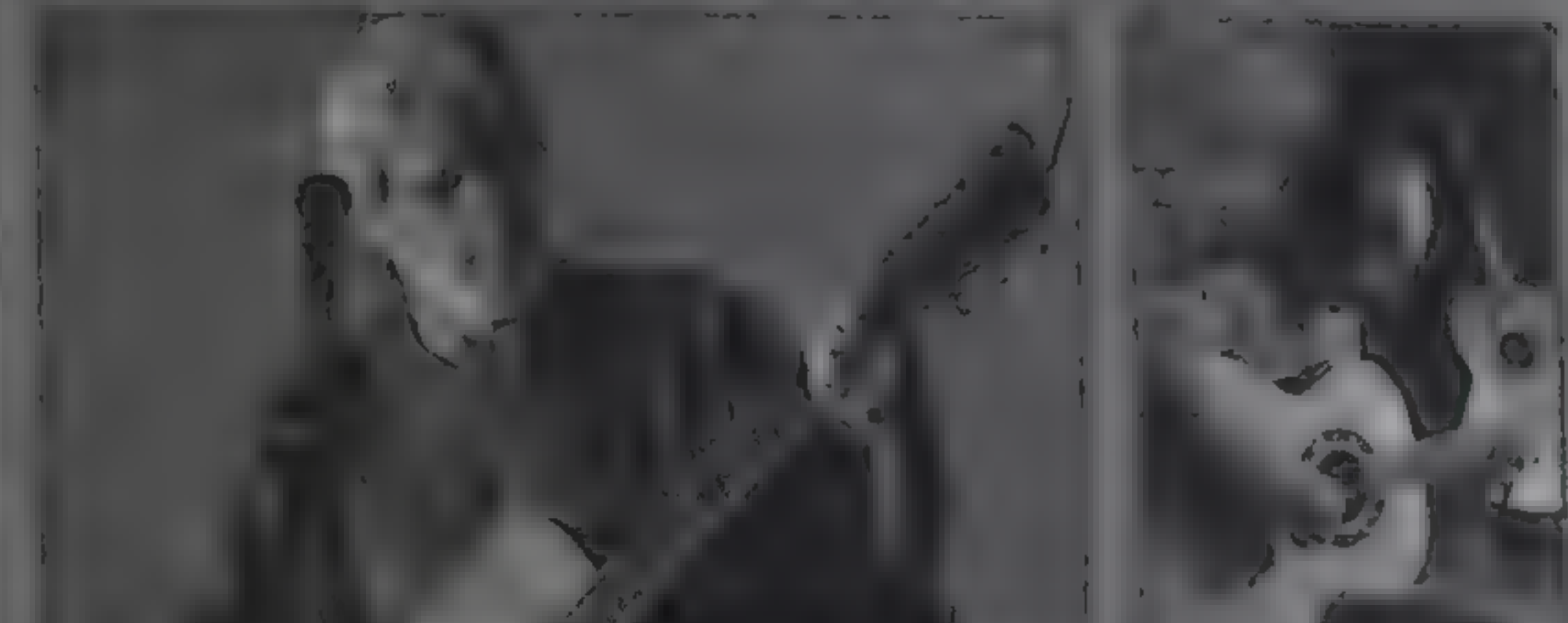
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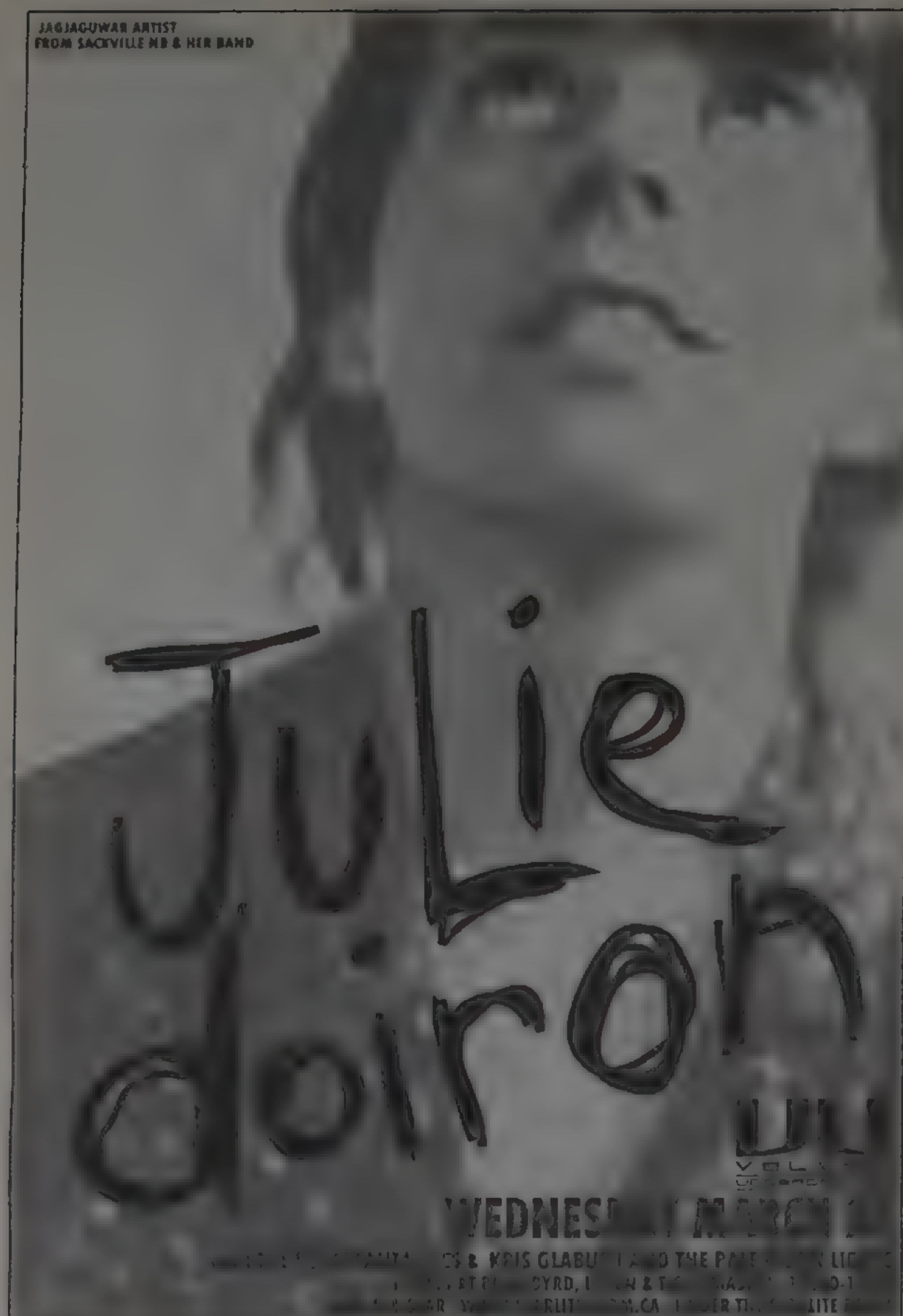
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JAGJAGUWAR ARTIST  
FROM SACKVILLE NB & HER BAND



PREVIEW  
SAT, MAR 22 (8 PM)  
**THE FUGITIVES**  
HULBERT'S, \$10

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com

The last time that Mark Berube was heading towards a show in Edmonton, he was touring his most recent solo album, *What the River Gave the Boat*. Unfortunately, Berube ran into a little trouble along the way and he never made his show here.

"It had been a crazy, crazy lead up to the tour, had a really good release in Vancouver, good show in Penticton, drove about three hours after the show in Penticton up to Sicamous because I had to get to Edmonton the next night," Berube recalls. "Got to bed at about 2:30 in the morning, slept 'til nine, got up and was making good time and then about 45 minutes east of Revelstoke my van just said, 'Goodbye.' And so I was stuck on the side of the road and it was Sunday afternoon, so all the people were heading eastbound. Nobody was stopping ... I had to get it towed all the way to Golden. I spent two days in Golden, so that was kind of fun."

"I got it fixed and continued, so I was able to make the Calgary show and then did the rest of it across the country," he continues, before adding with a laugh, "but it was about a \$1200 pit stop."

Nicely recovered from that tour, Berube is now prepping himself to head back this way with the *Fugitives*, a musical, spoken-word group that he's a member of, along with Barbara Adler, Brendan McLoud and Steven Charles.



Berube explains that the group was born almost accidentally. "Vancouver has a slam team every year that goes to the nationals in the States, the national slam competition, and the four people on the team went and there was a promoter from Oxford, England there who really took to the Vancouver team and wanted to have them to the UK for a four nations slam sort of thing," he relates. "One of the members didn't want to go and so they decided to try and make it a bit more of a music thing and they knew me from the scene in East Vancouver."

"So they invited me to go with them and then we ended up booking a little tour around that one show to make it worthwhile," he continues. "We made a

CD in my living room just so we could have something to sell off the stage and it kind of just took off from there."

Since that original homemade disc, the group has recorded *In Streetlight Communion*, a hypnotic and swirling mix of voice and music that straddles the line between traditional songwriting and poetry.

"On that album, what happened a lot of the time is I'd have a song and then I'd bring it to them and we'd just workshop it trying to fit in the spoken word verse or overlapping spoken word," Berube says about the writing of the album. "There are a couple of tricks we've learned how to embed the spoken word, so to speak, but always keeping the frame of the song." ▀

## ZODIAC | FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

WEDNESDAY  
freewill@vancouverweekly.com

### ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

*The Bible* says you should kill adulterers, homosexuals, and brides who aren't virgins (Leviticus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 22:21). But I beg you not to do any such thing. The good book also asserts that it's OK to beat your servants as long as you don't go too far and murder them (Exodus 21:21). Again, I ask you to ignore this advice. I furthermore pray that you won't circumcise your heart, as recommended in Jeremiah 9:26. In general, Aries, it's an excellent time to free yourself from insidious absurdities that seeped into your brain from outmoded books, stale traditions or sketchy teachings and theories you opened yourself to when you were younger. Seek out the inspiring shock of freshly minted wisdom.

### TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

Hotel employees in the UK report a dramatic upsurge in naked sleepwalking by their guests. They're not referring to people who merely get out of bed and stumble around their rooms in the dark. These are bare, dream-drunk explorers who wander down the halls, knock on strangers' doors and visit the reception desk. In the coming week, please monitor any tendencies you might have to engage in this type of behaviour, or, for that matter, in any slumbering adventures. The astrological omens suggest you may be inclined to carry out complex actions or make important decisions while not fully conscious. All week long, keep asking

yourself this question: "Am I truly awake right now?"

### GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

It's an excellent time to seek out new allies, expand your social network and make connections with influences that will motivate you to grow smarter and stronger. Here are the kinds of connections you might want to be on the lookout for: 1) hard workers who find everything funny; 2) down-to-earth idealists who place no emotional value on having expensive possessions; 3) nerds who are cocky in mysterious ways; 4) humble perfectionists who obsess over the integrity of every little thing they do and then mock themselves for being so conscientious; 5) couples who hold hands and jump into big puddles with their nice clothes on; 6) sympathetic listeners who will kindly kick your ass if you need it.

### CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

Some readers get mad when I quote leaders they consider immoral. If you're like that, you may be upset that this horoscope cites Jack Welch. He was the longtime CEO of General Electric, which makes critical components for more nuclear weapons systems than any other company. In my defence, my policy is to learn from everyone, even villains and adversaries I disagree with. The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to adopt that same attitude. I suggest that you gather information from every useful source as you rev up and fine-tune your ambition. Now here are Welch's rules for success: 1) Control your destiny or someone else will; 2) Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it would be; 3) Be candid with everyone; and 4) Change before you have to.

### LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

Writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, columnist Jon Carroll described the behaviour of certain young spiders in the Sacramento Delta. When one of these "spiderlings" is ready to leave its birthplace and go in search of adventure, it spins out a long gossamer strand, climbs aboard and leaps into the unknown. Floating in mid-air, it's carried by the wind to who-knows-where, eventually landing in its new homeland. While I'm normally a big advocate of having goals and making plans, this is one of those rare times when I advise you to act more like the spiderlings.

### VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

Secrets are always bad, right? They are the lynchpins of corruption, the evil mechanisms by which unethical power-mongers do their dirty deeds. In the sphere of intimate relationships, secrets are lies of omission that insidiously corrode the trust between people. But in the coming days, Virgo, I'd like you to entertain the possibility that secrets can also be blessings. To jumpstart your redemptive meditations, read these thoughts from philosopher Sissela Bok's book *Secrets: on the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation*: "We are all experts on secrecy. From earliest childhood we feel its mystery and attraction. We know both the power it confers and the burden it imposes. We learn how it can delight, give breathing space and protect."

### LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

British pop star Kate Nash sent a message in a song to a guy she had a crush on. "I wish that you knew when I said two sugars, actually, I meant three." In other

words, her idea of a soulmate is someone who reads her mind and knows what she needs even if she isn't clear about what she needs. This is the opposite of the way you should proceed in the coming weeks, Libra. Don't assume that the people whose love you crave are telepathic geniuses with a perfect understanding of your every nuance. Spell it all out.

### SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

This is one of those rare times when your empathy could undo you unless you adhere to the following guidelines: 1) Squelch any attraction you might have to fascinating ruins, sexy decay, or appalling beauty; 2) If you have been sucked into the sphere of a good-looking monster or seductive tyrant, yank yourself free; 3) Break your gaze the instant you sense you're falling under the sway of a flaming narcissist; and 4) Suppress the temptation to think this thought: "I'm bored with my hell; I want to hang out in your hell for a change."

### SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

On the morning of May 4, 2004, film producer Rielle Hunter woke up to find herself, by her own admission, fully enlightened. Soon she had become "addicted to higher consciousness," and was unable to get involved with anything unless it expanded her awareness. If such a sequence of events were ever going to occur for you, Sagittarius, it would start soon.

### CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

You would stir up exciting changes in your approach to life in you took time in the next few weeks to find out more about the crowning achievements of your most intriguing ancestors. It will also be a

favourable time for you to engage in dreamy conversations with the historical figures you admire most, and to muse in luxurious detail on memories of events that were crucial in making you who you are. For extra credit, have fun imagining who you were in your last two incarnations. The past has gifts to give you Capricorn. Go gather them up.

### AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

According to the book *The Meaning of Tingo*, Filipinos make use of the Tagalog term "layogenic" to refer to a person who looks really attractive from a distance, but not so good close-up. I'm guessing that in the coming week you may encounter more than one phenomenon that could fit that description. That's why I suggest you stop undervaluing the people, things, and experiences that are right in front of you. They might seem as spectacular as the far-off phantasms. But unlike the phantasms, they really are pretty fine.

### PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

Musician Sarah McLachlan told the crowd at one of her concerts: "I feel great about singing really depressing songs." In the U2 song "A Man and a Woman" Bono sings, "The only pain is to feel nothing at all." They are your role models in the coming week, Pisces. I hope they inspire you to feel grateful for your capacity to experience such intense emotions. You're lucky to be so sensitive! So please celebrate your talent for feeling melancholy and overwhelmed. Congratulate yourself for being such a connoisseur of guilt, confusion and anxiety. You're more alive than other people. ▀



## EVENTS WEEKLY

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DEADLINE IS FRIDAY AT 3 PM

## CLUBS/LECTURES

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S EDMONTON GROUP** Knox Metropolitan Church lounge, 8307-109 St (462-1871) • Presentation, *The Radical Librarian* talks about *Human Rights* by Dr Toni Samek • Tue, Mar. 25 (7:30pm) • Free

**ARTS OUTREACH BIG BANDS** MacEwan's Centre for the Arts (497-4303) • For musicians of all levels to play a variety of music • Tue or Wed (7:30-9:30pm)

**AWA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP** Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr, Bishop St, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet every Mon including holidays (7:30pm)

**CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE** 11205-101 St (479-1999) • Basketball, Mon (5-7pm) • Healing Circle, Mon (6-8pm) • Boxing, Mon/Thu (7-9pm), Tue (5-7pm) • Volleyball, Tue (6-8pm) • Sewing Circle, Tue (6-8pm) • Beadwork Class, Wed (6-8pm) • C.N.F.C. Pow-wow, Wed (6-9pm) • Hip-Hop Class, every Thu (5-7pm) • Cree Class, Thu (6-8pm) • Elders and Residency, Fri (all day) • Safe Using and Harm Reduction, last Fri every month (11am-12pm) • Tobacco Reduction, every Fri (1-2pm) • Drop-in Night, Fri (6-8pm)

**DERRICK JENSEN—CIVILIZATION, THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE, AND RESISTANCE** TransAlta Arts Barn Westbury Theatre, 10330-84 Ave (439-1160) • Lecture by author and activist Derrick Jensen • Mon, Mar. 24 (7-9pm) • \$10/\$5 (low income) at Earth's General Store, 439-8725, 439-1160, at lella@sierra-club.ca, www.derrickjensen.org

**ENCOUNTER POINT** Catalyst Theatre, 8828 Gateway Blvd • Film about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict resolution movement presented in conjunction with *Rachel Corrie* • Mar. 31 (8pm) • \$8 (suggested donation, sliding scale)

**AN EVENING OF EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY** NAIT, Shaw Theatre, 11762-106 St (488-2266) • Topics and speakers: How to speak with influence and advocate for your loved ones, lecture by Dr. Cary Brown; Small changes in make a big impact, lecture by Bill Mower; *Kigumun* • Mar. 20 (7-9pm) • Free, pre-register

**EXPLORE STILLNESS** Unity Church of Edmonton, 13210-106 Ave, www.unityofedmonton.ca (913-6466) • With Eckhart Tolle, the *Stillness Amidst the World* video/discussion/meditation • Wed, Mar. 26, Apr. 9, 23 (7-9pm) • Rev. Racine's series of talks based on Tolle's book *A New Earth—Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, 10:30am, Sunday services

**FREE YOGA** Lullalemon Athletics Kingsway security entrance 2 (471-1200) • All levels welcome, new styles each week, mats provided • Every Sun (6-7pm)

**FUTURE TUESDAYS** Rm 129, U of A Education Bldg, 87 Ave (492-5055) • Presentation by Jeff McCune, *Future of Music and Drama in Education* • Tue, Mar. 25

**IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB** Allendale School, 6415-106 St/Telus Field Club House, 10233-96 Ave, Gate 5 (469-9776/452-6224) www.imagesab.ca • Meeting at Allendale School on Mar. 27 only • Meeting at Telus Field Club House on Apr. 10 • Will be relocating to the Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860-57 Ave for meetings in April and May

**INNOVATION FOR SALE: THE WAR PROTESTERS** CEB 325 (Civil Engineering Building/Physics), U of A • Documentary • Wed, Mar. 26 (5pm) • Free

**JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY** Edmonton Room, Stanley A. Milner Library (479-1729) • What do you think of PBS' Jane Austen films? • Sat, Mar. 22 (2-4pm) • Free

**LIFE AFTER FORMALISM** Rm 2-20, Fine Arts Bldg, U of A • Lecture by Karen Wilkin, presented by the Art Gallery of Alberta, 422-6223 • Mar. 20 (7pm)

**LUNCH BY THE BOOKS: PYSANKA: THE UKRAINIAN EASTER EGG IN CANADA** Main Floor, Centre Core, Stanley A. Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq • Marya Lesiv will discuss the pysanka as it exists today in Canada as a product of over one hundred years of Ukrainian experiences in this country • Thu, Mar. 20 (12:05-12:50pm)

**MEDITATION • Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society** 11403-101 St, www.gadensamtenling.org (479-0014) by Kushok Lobzang Dharmchoe: beginner Tue (7pm); intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization**, 208, 10132-105 St (425-1050) www.bkwsu.org: Raja Yoga Meditation • **Tranquility Meditation Tibetan Tradition** 10502-70 Ave (633-6157) www.karmatashling.org: Beginners welcome, instruction available; Wed (7pm); free

**NO END IN SIGHT** Muddy Waters, 821-111 St • Documentary to commemorate the 5th Anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq • Sat, Mar. 22 (8pm) • Donation, pay what you can

**OUTDOOR WAY OF THE CROSS** Boyle Street Community Centre Hall, 9515-104 Ave (466-6327/423-675) • A prayer walk through the urban core of Edmonton • Fri, Mar. 21 (10am-noon)

**RIVERDALE NETZERO HOME TOUR** 9926-87 St • Open house: see the active and passive solar heating, operating grid-dependent solar power systems, ultra-highly insulated air-tight walls, high performance windows • Sat, Mar. 29 (11am-4:30pm) • Free

**SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVIE NIGHT** Unitarian Church of Edmonton, Main Hall, 10804-119 St • US Imperialism: Latin America, Cuba Embargo; *War on Democracy* and *Rioque*. Discussion of the political and social conditions in Latin America will follow the films • Fri, Mar. 29 (6:30pm door) • \$5 (donation, or Pay-What-You-Can) at the door

**THOUGHTFUL TUESDAY** Steeps Tea Lounge, 11116-82 Ave (988-8105) • Film/documentary series showing the documentary *Zeitgeist* • Tue, Mar. 25 (7pm)

**TOASTMASTERS CLUBS • Chamber Toastmasters Club:** Chamber of Commerce, 600, 9990 Jasper Ave (459-5206), Thu (6pm) • **MacEwan:** Grant MacEwan College, Rm 5-238, 10700-104 Ave (633-3921), Fri (noon-1pm) • **Norators Toastmasters Club:** Londonderry Public Library www.norators.com, Wed (7-8:45pm) • **Power Speakers:** Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts, Rm 437, 10045-156 St (459-0642), Wed (7-9pm) • **Pursuers:** Best Western Cedar Park Inn, 5116 Gateway Boulevard (457-0808), Wed (7-9pm) • **Chanticleer:** Kingsway Rm, Millard Health Building, 131 Airport Rd (458-4808/474-1138) Thu (7-8:30am) • **Upward Bound:** Norquest College, Rm 601, 10215-108 St (454-3720), every Wed (7-8:45pm)

**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA VISITING SPEAKERS LECTURE** Fine Arts Building, Rm 2-20 • Lecture by installation artist, Laura Vickerson • Thu, Mar. 20 (5pm) • Free

**WAHI PIGS, POLICE AND PENIS GOURDS** Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre (496-7032) • Documentary film presented by Adventure Inks, followed by discussion • Thu, Mar. 20 (7pm) • Free

**WALK A MILE: THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN CANADA** Mill Woods Library/Mill Woods Town Centre, 2331-66 St (496-1818) • A 4-part NFB film series presented by EIMSNS • Part III and IV, Thu, Mar. 20 (7pm) • Free, pre-register at 496-1818

**WOMEN IN BLACK** In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat (10-11am) every month, stand in silence for a world without violence

## QUEER LISTINGS

**BUDDY'S NITE CLUB** 117258 Jasper Ave (488-7736) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDivi and Donatella NEI in The GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ Sexxy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

**GLBT SPORTS AND RECREATION** www.teamedmonton.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton, Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St (465-3620), Wed (6-7:30pm) • Bootcamp, St. Alphonsus, 11624-81 St Mon (7-8pm); bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling: Gateway Lanes, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd; Sat (5-7pm); bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Running: Sun, Tue, Thu; running@teamedmonton.ca • Swimming: NAIT pool, 11762-106 St, Tue (8-9pm), Thu (7:30-8:30pm), swimming@teamedmonton.ca • Volleyball: 101 Amiskwacay Academy, Municipal Airport Terminal just off Kingsway; Wed recreational (8-10pm); recvolleyball@teamedmonton.ca • Thu: Intermediate; volleyball@teamedmonton.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Lion's Breath Yoga, every Sun (2-3:30pm); yoga@teamedmonton.ca

**INSIDE/OUT** U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu every month (fall/winter terms); Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kwells@ualberta.ca)

**LIVING POSITIVE** 404, 10408-124 St, www.edmliving-positive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue (7-9pm); Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

**MADEIRA SAMAH FOUNDATION** Faculté St. Jean, Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat (8am-5pm) every month • Free (member/\$10 (membership)) • Pre-register

**MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB** www.geocities.com/makingwaves\_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

**PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON** 9540-111 Ave, www.pridecentreofedmonton.org (488-3234) • Open Tue-Fri 1pm-10pm, Sat 12-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in: Social time for seniors of all genders to get together with tea and snacks; every Thu and Tue (1-4:30pm) • CA: Meet every Thu (7pm) • Womanspace: Board meeting 1st Sun every month (10:30am-12:30pm) • Youth Movie Night: Fri (6pm) • Games Night: Coffee and games; 1st and last Fri every month; Fri (7-9pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group; every Sat (12pm) • Youth Understanding Youth: Youth (up to 25 years) support and social group; every Sat (7-9pm) e-mail yuy@shaw.ca • Trans Education/Support Group: A place to come and be yourself. Support and education for Transsexual, Transgendered, Intersexed, Two-Spirited and questioning individuals at any point in transition, 1st and 3rd Sun every month (2-4pm); www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Men's social and discussion group facilitated by Rob Wells, robwells780@hotmail.com; every Sun (7pm) • HIV Support Group; 2nd Mon every month (7pm) • TTIO Alliance, support meeting, Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning, Education, Advocacy and Support for Men, Women and Youth; 2nd Tue every month (7:30pm) • PFLAG: A support and resource group for parents and friends of GLBT individuals; 1st Tue every month (7pm) • Youth Theatre Project: Youth-led group addresses homophobia through theatre and a video project; every Wed (7pm), Email Emily@pride-centrefedmonton.org • YouthSpace: A safe and fun drop-in for LGBTQ youth (up to 25); Tue-Sat (3-7pm)

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH** 11526-76 Ave (436-1555) • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

**WOODY'S** 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**AFRICAN EASTERN BENEFIT CONCERT** Jubilee Auditorium, 11455-87 Ave • Multicultural Family Resource Society • Thu, Mar. 27 (8pm) • \$35 (adult/\$22 (student/senior) at TIX on the Square, door

**THE BUSKER'S BALL** Naked on Jasper, 10354 Jasper Ave, http://buskersball.tvtysted.net • Concert fundraiser for the Parkland Institute • Mar. 21 (6:30pm door) • \$10 (suggested donation)

**DANCE PERCUSSION STUDIO SOCIETY** • 7252-101 Ave; Rwandan artists Vincent Nsengiyumva and the Vanginanga Cultural Troupe (a dance, song, drumming and percussion workshop); Mar. 25 (7:30-9:30pm); \$20 (adult/\$10 (child 8-12 yr); pre-register, 433-4752/485-2515 • Winspear Centre; Rwandan artists Vincent

Nsengiyumva and the Vanginanga Cultural Troupe in performance with other artists; Sun, Mar. 23 • Jubilee Auditorium; Nsengiyumva and the Vanginanga Cultural Troupe in performance with other artists; Thu, Mar. 27 (8pm) • In support of African students in Edmonton (Children Stay in School Society)

**FREEDOM FROM POVERTY FUNDRAISER GALA** Cloverdale Community Hall, 9411 97 Ave • Fundraiser for the Uhuru Youth Centre for African Arts, including a traditional East African dinner, silent auction and live African entertainment • Sat, Mar. 29 (5:45pm) • \$40 at TIX on the Square

**HAIRCUTS FOR HAITI** Urban Roots Salon, 10418-82 Ave • Basic cuts for a donation, all profits go to the Open Air Medical clinic • Mar. 28 (6-9pm)

**HUMAN SERVE INTERNATIONAL** Palace Banquet Hall, 3223 Parsons Rd, 99 St, www.humanserve.org (885-0000/709-9729) • Fundraiser in support of the people of Gaza • Sat, Mar. 29 (6:30pm) • \$35 (incl. dinner) proceeds to the Orphans of IRFAN (International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy)

**STANLEY CARROLL, 25 YEARS OF FASHION ANNIVERSARY PARTY** Latitude 53 Gallery, 10248 106 St • Retrospective fashion display and show and current collections from Stanley Carroll • Sat, Mar. 29 (7pm) • \$20 (include appetizers) at TIX on the square, door

**A TASTE OF ARGENTINA** Sutton Place Ballroom, 10235-101 St • Edmonton Jazz Festival Society: Argentinean wines, silent and live auction • Thu, Mar. 27 (7pm) • \$55 at TIX on the Square to raise money for the Edmonton International Jazz Festival, the Edmonton Jazz Orchestra and the Jazzworks educational component of the society

**TRADESHOW FOR FUNDRAISERS IN EDMONTON** Fantasyland Ballroom, WEM • *24/7 Life of a Fund Raiser*: Theatre sports presentation, Bridget Ryan plays the role of storyteller, starring Carmen Boyko and Brian Wilkie, as members of AAFRE • Mar. 26 (3pm) • \$12 online, door • Pre-register, www.aafre.org

**WORLD WATER DAY** Fiddler's Roost, 8906-99 St (439-9788) • Music and Art Show with E.D. (Ted) Blodgett, presenting a new poem followed by various music acts, artworks by Spyder Yardley-Jones and displays and speakers from eco-groups Council of Canadians and Keepers of the Athabasca • Mar. 22 (7pm door; 7:30pm music) • \$10 (door), part of the proceeds will be donated to water-issues charities

## KARAOKE

**BLIND PIG** 32 St. Anne Street, St. Albert • Wed/Fri: Karaoke with Shelly

**BILLY BOB'S SPORTS BAR** Continental Inn, Stony Plain Rd (484-7751) • Wed (8pm-12am); Thu, Fri, Sat (9:30pm-1:30am); with Right Said Ed

**CASTLEDOWN'S PUB** 16753-100 St • Tue (9pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

**CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB** 37 Millbourne Rd • Every Tue (9pm) with Sonia/Prosound

**CROWN AND ANCHOR** 15277 Castledowns Rd (472-7696) • Thu (10:30pm) • Wed: Name that Tune

**ECCO PUB** 9605-66 Ave • Every Sat (9pm-1am)

**GAS PUMP** 10166-114 St (488-4841) • Tue (9:30pm); Gord's Best Live Singing Show

**HAWKEYES TOO** 10044-102 St (421-8899) • Fri (8pm-midnight); Hot Karaoke Productions

**HOULAGANZ PUB** 10704-124 St (452-1168) • Fri: Karaoke with Krista, Liquid Entertainment

**INGLEWOOD PUB** 12402-118 Ave (451-1390) • Karaoke every Thu, Fri and Sat

**JASPER PLACE HOTEL** 15326 Stony Plain Rd (489-1906) • Every Monday (8pm-12am) • Every Tue/Thu (1pm and 2pm) Bingo

**KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH** 19 Ave, 105 St (481-0587) • Sat (10pm-2am); Gord's Best Live Singing Show

**LAMONT HOTEL** • Last Fri every month (10pm-2am) with ProSound Productions

**LIONSHEAD PUB** Coast Terrace Inn, 4440 Gateway Blvd (431-5815) • Sun (8pm): With Evolution Entertainment

**MAZADAR** 10725-104 Ave (429-4940) • Fri (5pm-late); Karaoke with Chris

**MOJO'S** Best Western Hotel, Fort Saskatchewan (998-7888) • Fri (9:30pm); with Sonia/Prosound Productions

**MONA USA'S PUB** 9606-118 Ave (477-7752) • Karaoke Thu, Fri. Sat with great hosts, sound and songs

**NEWCASTLE PUB** 6108-90 Ave (490-1999) • Thu: Karaoke

**NEW WEST HOTEL** 15025-111 Ave • Every Sun (3-7pm)

**NIKITA'S** 10162-100A St (414-0506) • Karaoke Tue and Thu (7pm-12am) with Shelly

**O'CONNOR'S IRISH PUB** 9013-88 Ave (469-8165) • Thu (9pm): Name that Tune

**ON THE ROCKS** 11740 Jasper Ave (482-4767) • Karaoke Mon (9:30pm); with Wil Clark and Mr. Entertainment • Salsa Rocks: Cuban salsa DJ; Thu (9pm)

**ORLANDO'S 1** 15163-121 St (457-1649) • Wed/Thu/Sun (9:30pm-2am); with TLC Entertainment

**OVERDRIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB** 6401-104 St (588-5457) • Sat (8pm): Karaoke hosted by Jenny Joy

**ROSARIOS** 11715-108 Ave (447-4727) • Longest running Karaoke bar; 7 days a week

**ROSIE'S BAR AND GRILL** • Downtown, 10604-101 St (423-3499) • Mon-Sat (9pm); Sun (7pm); with Ruth • Highstreet, 10315-124 St (462-1600); daily (9:30pm) • Old Strathcona, 10475-80 Ave (439-7211); Thu-Sat (9:30pm-1:30am) • 99 St, 63 Ave; Thu-Sat (9pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

**SPORTSWORLD INLINE AND ROLLER SKATING DISCO** 13710-104 St (472-5336) • Tue, Fri-Sat (7pm-midnight); Sat-Sun (1-5pm)

**THORSEY HOTEL** • Every Sat (9:30pm-1:30am) with ProSound Productions

**TRANSIT HOTEL** 12720 Fort Rd • Every Thu (7:30-11:30pm) with ProSound Productions

**X WRECKS LOUNGE** 9303-50 St • Every Wed (7:30-11:30pm) with Sonia/Prosound

**YESTERDAY'S** 112-205 Carnegie Dr, St. Albert (459-0295) • Thu (9:30pm-2am); with Off-Key Entertainment

Knowing but not saying:  
being gay in the family

1987

## QUEERMONTON

TED KERR  
ted@vuwweekly.com

Growing up gay you learn how to record your life in two ways: an edited version that you can share with everyone and a second one that is the truth, full of excitement and shame.

The first version is the one you share with your family, it is your way of protecting them from the things about yourself that scare you the most.

All children pick up signs that tell them what is acceptable in the world around them, what will cause grief, what will bring joy. As a gay kid you are even more sensitive to signs and signals, especially to things around gender and sexuality. You might not know what the words mean, but your ears perk up when you hear the word faggot, your heart drops when someone says the word sissy. You fear deep down that you are these things so you do everything in your power to distance yourself from the words and the feelings. In the process you push people away, creating a moat of unspoken words and Swiss cheese stories.

I think about all this now, almost a week after my Grandma died. She survived the depression in rural Europe, a bombed out London during WW II, endless winters on the plains of Alberta, the death of her only child at a young age, the loss of her husband in the bed right beside her and yet under the childlike guise of wanting to protect her I couldn't bring myself to tell my Grandma that I was gay—and now it is too late.

I was close to her. Really, I was my Grandma's only living relative and she was my last connection to a past. I was her precariously last genetic link on this chaotic planet of strangers. We were each other's past and future. I see now how I kept parts of myself from her as a way of preserving our bond, a misguided attempt at protecting her, when really it was me that was afraid.

I would visit her at least once every two months at her home in Innisfail, staying the weekend, collecting the stack of *Reader's Digest* books and *MacLean's* magazines she had saved for me, spending the Saturday night talking about history, current events, politics and the plight of celebrities. I would call her about once a week, listen to what was new in town and then tell her about work and friends, nothing more.

Last week, as I sat in palliative care watching my Grandma sleep into death, I realized that the time had passed in which I could tell her about who I really

was and whom I loved. I knew that I was not going to play out a cliché, self-serving scene of confession where I got to feel better by unloading my baggage on to her soul that was preparing to move on up.

**SHE DIDN'T DESERVE THAT.** She had never tried to stop me from telling her I was gay and I had never attempted to tell her. I knew I was gay, I was pretty sure she knew I was gay and the silent, shared knowing was going to be the closest we would come to acknowledging it in this lifetime.

By not asking about girlfriends, relationships, marriages or the prospects of great grandchildren she was communicating to me that she knew I was different. By keeping the silence I was confirming to her that yes, indeed I was.

Although I could blame a culture that supported this unspoken agreement as an excuse to why I never felt secure enough to talk to

my Grandma about me being gay I must take responsibility for my actions. It was me who chose not to break through the comfortable impasse we had reached and thus robbed us both of an opportunity to grow and transcend a little in this lifetime.

By not "coming out" to my Grandma I gave life to the culturally inherited, wrongly held, internalized homophobic belief that says people will not accept you, that loved ones will turn their backs. I didn't give her an opportunity to prove it wrong and I didn't give myself a chance to be accepted by her.

Earlier this week, after seeing my Grandma laid to rest, my boyfriend took photos of me in my Grandparent's old neighbourhood. Standing there paralyzed by posing for the camera I remembered pacing those streets convincing my 11-year-old self how easy it was going to be to keep my gayness a secret for the rest of my life, resolving never to get married to a lady and just keep my feelings about other dudes to myself.

Of course the resolution was not to keep. I "came out," got involved, made friends, had sex, found myself in relationships with men, all without sharing it with my Grandma. It was what I knew to do.

Sitting on her couch one Saturday night a week or two after she saw *Brokeback Mountain* in the Innisfail Theatre, my Grandma mentioned how sad she was that the two cowboys never got to walk off into the Alberta sunset together.

It was a tender, small, giving moment that I let pass. In all her generosity and kindness she crossed the moat and I chose to remain uncomfortable and silent. I see now that by saying that, in her own way, my Grandma had said it all for both of us. ♥





# Hey, play with knives and fire if you must, but no breath play

## ADVICE ALT.SEX.COLUMN

ANDREA NEMERSON  
altsex@altsexcolumn.com

DEAR ANDREA:

*This is my third serious boyfriend, I think I'm his second. He's into fairly hardcore masochism. Not like smack-me-around-a-little-Master masochism, which I'd cheerfully go along with, but shit like choking and knives and fire and no safeword. He's also tried to convince me to fuck him without lube or preparation, which really doesn't sound like a good idea to me. He says that he's been playing like this but never to the extent that he wants to. So ... how rough can I get without actually, really hurting him? Any suggestions for good books or websites?*

LOVE, GENTLE BEN

DEAR BEN:

Your boyfriend is into "edgeplay," and/or possibly "RACK," (risk aware consensual kink) the fairly recently named alternative to the long-used and unnecessarily apologetic-sounding "safe, sane, and consensual" label for S&M activity. There's a little essay explaining the distinction here: [leatherroses.com/generalbds/m/medlinss.c.htm](http://leatherroses.com/generalbds/m/medlinss.c.htm), but for those who aren't online this second the idea is that you acknowledge that what you're doing is potentially dangerous (rather than pretending that knowledge and precautions can render any activity completely "safe"), and agree to accept that before going on. It doesn't mean that you necessarily have to do dangerous stuff, or that you do your dangerous stuff more dangerously, far from it. Truly "risk aware" kinks, after all, are presumably also aware of things like proper technique, good gear and common sense.

As for how far you can take "it," well, that surely depends on which "it" we're

talking about, and there are a lot of them on your list, at a lot of different potential risk levels. Knives and fire, for instance, can both be managed with little risk of real harm, assuming one knows what one is doing. You can take a class, for one thing, and for another, a very sharp, very clean knife applied lightly to a nice expanse of muscle like the upper arm or thigh or the ever-popular buttock just isn't that dangerous. Fire, in the form of dripped candle wax, singed arm hair or flaming swathes of alcohol, can give a similar big bang for small danger buck, again provided you know what you're doing. Of course, pretty much the most experienced, most dedicated total freakazoid sadist I know did kind of set his girlfriend on fire with flaming hand-sanitizer once, and in front of an audience at that, but even they emerged more embarrassed than crispy. For tips and tricks it's probably best to learn from an experienced player or take a class, but failing that, Greenery Press's Toybag series ([greenerypress.com](http://greenerypress.com)) is

probably your best resource.

The no-prep, no lube business is potentially problematic but I can see how lots of people, really really experienced people, could actually handle that. Find out if he's one of them. Of course, you could always cheat and put the lube on you and never tell him. He can't see back there, you know.

You may have noticed that I didn't include choking in my not-as-scary-as-it-sounds list, and for good reason. Personally, I think choking/breath play is precisely as scary as it sounds since, unlike practices which might cause a nasty infection or an unsightly scar, breath play can make you dead in very short order, and completely unpredictably. Jay Wiseman, the EMT and kink educator who has written on and studied this the most, comes down firmly against (fetishexchange.org/breath2.shtml) in his well-known article, "The Medical Realities of Breath Control Play." The other authority on such subjects, the much-published Charles Moser, MD, is somewhat more equivocal:

the time I talked to him about it he basically said, "It can kill you. I won't tell you not to do it though. Oh, but it can absolutely kill you, and you'd never see it coming. People have a right to do it, though."

If you and the b-friend are negotiating about this stuff, and you'd better be or I'm coming over there and kicking your ass myself, I suggest agreeing to oh, I dunno, carve "I LUV BRITNEY" on his chest and flog him through the streets with a flaming medieval flail, but refusing, unconditionally, to choke or black him out. Just say no.

As for playing without a safeword, fine, whatever. You know and he knows that if he were really in trouble he'd manage to communicate this to you, and you would stop. No big deal. There's one more thing we haven't covered about consensuality though, and it's a big one: you, the presumptive top? Do you even want to do this? You get to say no too, you know. Call "safeword" if you have to. LOVE, ANDREA

## VOLUNTEER

Volunteer website for youth 14-24 years old.  
[www.youthvolunteer.ca](http://www.youthvolunteer.ca)

Volunteer for the AGA and meet other art enthusiasts, get a free membership after 30 hrs of volunteer work, get invitations to events and movies. For info contact Priscilla Wagar at 422-6223 or [pwagar@art-galleryalberta.com](mailto:pwagar@art-galleryalberta.com)

S.C.A.R.S.  
Second Chance Animal Rescue Society  
There is a suitable home for all homeless animals, young or old!  
[scarscare.org](http://scarscare.org)

**The Support Network:** Volunteer today to be a Distress Line Listener. Apply on line at: [www.the-supportnetwork.com](http://www.the-supportnetwork.com) or call 732-6648

Meals on Wheels, volunteer kitchen help and drivers needed, weekdays 10am-1pm. Call 429-2020.

ElderCare provides day programs for seniors. Volunteers are needed to help with daily activities such as crafts, card games and socializing. Please call 434-4747 Ext. 4

Love Bingo? Volunteer for Elder Care. Bingo volunteers are needed to help raise funds for program meals and outings. Ph 434-4747, ext. 4

Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival seeks steering committee volunteers. Visit [www.exposurefestival.ca](http://www.exposurefestival.ca)

Help to broadcast news nationally for the blind and print-restricted! Email [edmonton@voiceprintcanada.com](mailto:edmonton@voiceprintcanada.com), or call 451-8331

Special needs "Learn to Bike" courses at Gold Bar Park are looking for volunteer experienced cyclists to help with this course. Thu evenings **May 1-June 12, Sept. 4-Oct. 16** John at [jbcollier@shaw.ca](mailto:jbcollier@shaw.ca)

Planned Parenthood Association of Edmonton Board Recruiting 2008 - 2009 / [www.ppae.ab.ca](http://www.ppae.ab.ca). Looking for active, committed individuals who are interested in advancing the Mission of PPAE. Contact Lance @ Planned Parenthood Edmonton T: 423-3737, E: [lance@ppae.ab.ca](mailto:lance@ppae.ab.ca)

### Tulips for Parkinson's

Support the Parkinson's Society. Buying a potted tulip available at various venues in Edmonton and surrounding areas **March 12-20, 2008**  
**April is Parkinson's Awareness month**

Have you been affected by another person's sexual behaviour? S-Anon is a 12-Step fellowship for the family members and friends of sex addicts. Call 988-4411 for Edmonton area meeting locations and information, or visit [www.sanon.org](http://www.sanon.org)

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## VUEWEEKLY

### CONTEST RULES:

Unless otherwise specified, the following will apply:

- the winner must be 18 or older.
- prize must be accepted as awarded.
- no one may enter any contest more than once.
- you may only win once every 60 days.
- Vue Weekly reserves the right to exclude anyone from our contests.
- no staff, sponsors or members of their immediate families may enter
- the personal information of those who enter will not be sold but may be provided to contest sponsors.
- the chances of winning depend on the number of entries received.
- by entering, entrants consent to the use of their names by Vue Weekly for publicity.
- Vue Weekly is not responsible for prizes unclaimed after 15 days.

*... always a happy ending*

## Euroassage

[www.EuroassageOnWhyte.com](http://www.EuroassageOnWhyte.com)

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glenys@vueweekly.com or drop it off at 10303-108  
St. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication.  
Placement will depend upon available space

Fringe production (*Hamletmachine* by Heiner Muller)  
is looking for male and female actors for the 2008  
festival. For audition info please contact Alyssa  
Hudson @ 432-3747

Musical director wanted for musical comedy for  
Edmonton Fringe produced by Maggots Inc.  
Contact Chris at 918-6644 or: wilasx@yahoo.am

The SNAP Society of Northern Alberta-Print-artists is  
excited to present **Edmonton Print International  
2008**. Please refer to the EPI website for submission  
guidelines. www.EdmontonPrintInternational.com

Looking for Local artists for donate art for charity auc-  
tion for www.ihuman.org for June. Please contact  
Jeannette ASAP jegan@ualberta.ca

Need a Fringe spot? Local actor has one and would like  
to collaborate, any genre, e-mail  
destisjour@hotmail.com

Motion Picture Arts at Red Deer College  
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graphic novels. Interested? Contact Ike at  
lobitec@hotmail.com or 452-3141

**Profiles** seeks proposals from artists for exhibition  
during 2009. **Deadline: Sat, Mar. 22, 4pm.** Info  
T: Heidi at 460-4310 or E: ahtheidi@telus.net

Edmonton Fashion Week is looking for male and female  
models. Go See on **Mar. 29**, 5-7pm at Planet Ze, 10055-  
80 Ave. Info at www.edmontonfashionweek.com

Edmonton Fashion Week is looking for dancers, musi-  
cians and performers. Auditions on **Mar. 29**, 5-7pm at  
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mike\_minty@yahoo.com

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Wanted jammers, rock, country and old time for month-

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Barrett @ 221-7413 or Brent @ 902-4551

## VOLUNTEER

Community Options Society/Board Recruiting 2008-  
2009: Community Options, a Society for Children &  
Families, is a non-profit Society, which has provided  
services to children and their families in  
Edmonton/area since 1976. contact: Deb Huber, Board  
Member, E: debhuber@shaw.ca / T: 637-6156

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